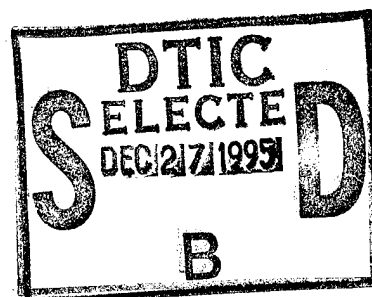


# NAVAL POSTGRADUATE SCHOOL MONTEREY, CALIFORNIA



## THESIS



### EL SALVADOR: AN EXAMPLE FOR CONFLICT RESOLUTION

by

Francisco A. Bandon

June, 1995

Thesis Advisor:

Paul Stockton

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## EL SALVADOR: AN EXAMPLE FOR CONFLICT RESOLUTION

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First Lieutenant, El Salvador Air Force  
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Submitted in partial fulfillment  
of the requirements for the degree of


### MASTER OF SCIENCE IN INTERNATIONAL PLANNING AND MANAGEMENT

from the

#### NAVAL POSTGRADUATE SCHOOL

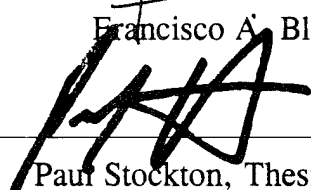
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## ABSTRACT

For twelve years, El Salvador was mired in a civil war that polarized all segments of Salvadoran society and that reflected deeply rooted economic, social, and political problems. Yet, El Salvador negotiated an end to its war in 1991. Why did these negotiations succeed? How did the peace process help drive the broader progress in political development and democratization? To what extent can the Salvadoran experience serve as an example for other nations, and offer broader insights into theories of comparative politics and political development?

This thesis argues that three related developments facilitated the peace process of El Salvador. After a bloody decade of war that began in 1979, both the Salvadoran government and the Frente Farabundo Marti para la Liberacion Nacional (FMLN) came to recognize that neither side could hope to win through force. This recognition spurred an unprecedented willingness on both sides to negotiate. Second, changes in the international system encouraged negotiations, particularly as political shifts within the Soviet Union dried up the FMLN's sources of outside support.

But many of these promises of assistance have not been kept. El Salvador faces severe economic and political problems, and these problems could impede full implementation of the peace accords. Ultimately, continued democratization in El Salvador -- and elsewhere in Latin America -- can only be based on political commitment, social justice, and economic growth. The international community can help facilitate the resolution of conflicts and aid the process of democratization. Nevertheless, the Salvadoran case suggests that the most critical prerequisites are the shared recognition that violence cannot provide victory, and that compromise and consensus is in the interest of all parties to the conflict.



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## I. INTRODUCTION

### A. OVERVIEW

Nowhere in Latin America has political change been so dramatic as in El Salvador. Twelve years of bloody civil war (1979-1991) polarized all segments of Salvadoran society. Yet in 1991, El Salvador resolved that conflict not on the battlefield but over a negotiating table. El Salvador found a path from armed conflict and military rule to relative peace under a democratic system. Officials of other Latin American nations facing similar internal challenges (including Guatemala and Colombia) have expressed interest in learning from the Salvadoran experience, and adapting elements of the Salvadoran peace process to suit their own specific needs and circumstances. What were the key elements of the peace process of El Salvador? To what extent can the Salvadoran experience serve as a example for other nations, and offer broader insights into theories of comparative politics and political development?

This thesis has three objectives. First, it offers a detailed and systematic analysis of the negotiations meetings between the government of El Salvador and the *Frente Fabarunbo Marti para la Liberacion Nacional* (FMLN - Farabundo Marti National Liberation Front). This account relies on original source materials and fills a significant gap in the English language literature on El Salvador. Second, the thesis analyzes how the peace process helped drive the larger process of political development and democratization in El Salvador. Third, the thesis examines the broader lessons illuminated by the negotiation and implementation process, so that other nations' scholars and policy-makers can borrow from the Salvadoran example to meet their own particular problems. While the Salvadoran example offers some significant successes, it also highlights some critical hurdles to democratization and conflict resolution.

This thesis argues that in El Salvador -- and elsewhere in Latin America -- the survival and consolidation of a nation's democratic norms depend on all segments of society and their capacity to adapt to changes taking place inside their nation and the willingness of political society to compromise and seek consensus. Ultimately, democracy is based on political freedom, social justice, and economic progress. Mutual recognition between civil society, political society, and the State is necessary to enhance the consolidation of democracy.

The structure of this thesis is as follows. Chapter I is an introduction, including political theory, which follows. Chapter II provides a historical background from the 19TH Century to the escalation of the Civil War (1979-1984). This chapter describes the factors that promoted the start of the civil war, the sequence of events from 1979 to 1984 that sparked the beginning of the peace talks, and uses Stepan's theory to explain how El Salvador moved from a military regime (1932-1979) to a free elected government (1979-1984).

Chapter III examines the peace process during former Presidents Jose Napoleon Duarte (1984-1989) and Alfredo Cristiani (1989-1992). An appendix shows the sequence of negotiation meetings from 1984 to 1992. This chapter also analyzes how different national and international variables influenced the outcome of each negotiation period. The chapter uses Gunther and Higley's theory to describe how the government and the FMLN reached an elite settlement.

Chapter IV analyzes the implementation process of the peace accords from 1992 to the present. This chapter also examines: 1) the phases of the implementation process; 2) the role that national and international actors played in the process; and 3) the nature of the problems affecting the implementation of the pending accords.

Chapter V discusses the future of El Salvador. It uses Dahl's theory to show how El Salvador's democracy evolved from 1932 to 1995, and examines several problems that need to be resolved to strengthen El Salvador's democratic consolidation. Chapter VI provides an overview of the relationship between the accomplishment of the peace accords and El Salvador's consolidation of democracy.

## B. THEORY

The literature on comparative politics offers a large number of theories that attempt to account for democratic transition and consolidation. Three approaches offer especially valuable (if only partially adequate) framework for assessing El Salvador's case. These approaches are described in Alfred Stepan, "Paths Toward Redemocratization: Theoretical and Comparative Considerations;"<sup>1</sup> John Higley and Richard Gunther, *Elites and Democratic*

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<sup>1</sup>Alfred Stepan, "Paths Toward Redemocratization: Theoretical and Comparative Considerations" in Transitions from Authoritarian Rule, Baltimore and London: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1986.

*Consolidation in Latin America and Southern Europe*,<sup>2</sup> and Robert A. Dahl, *Polyarchy: Participation and Opposition*.<sup>3</sup>

Stepan proposed eight different paths that could lead to the end of authoritarian regimes and to the process of redemocratization. He delineated several complex causes (economic, historical, political, and international) that could influence the outcome of the redemocratization process. Successful democratization, with or without these causes, may require the simultaneous pursuit of several paths. His eight paths are divided into three different parts:

I. Warfare and conquest play an integral role in redemocratization.

Path One. Internal Restoration after External Reconquest. Redemocratization takes place when a functioning democracy, conquered in war, restores democracy after the conqueror is defeated by external forces (e.g., The Netherlands, Belgium, Norway, and Denmark during WWII).

Path Two. Internal Reformulation. Redemocratization takes place after a conqueror has been defeated largely by external forces. There is much greater potential for political instability and for rightist reaction or leftist structural change than path one (e.g., Greece and France).

Path Three. Externally Monitored Installation. Democratic powers defeat an authoritarian regime and play a major role in the formulation and implementation of a democratic regime. The major political weakness of this path is its foreign imposition. It will appear to have a lack of legitimacy not found in Path One. There is power to dismantle the military and political institutions and other features of the authoritarian state apparatus (e.g., West Germany and Japan).

II. Termination of authoritarian regime and the move toward redemocratization could be initiated by the wielders of authoritarian power themselves.

Path Four. Redemocratization Initiated from within the Authoritarian Regime. The perception of major institutional power-holders within the ruling authoritarian coalition that, because of changing conditions, their long-term interests are best pursued in a context in which authoritarian institutions give way to democratic institutions. This path has three subdivisions.

Path Four(a). Redemocratization Initiated by the Civilian or Civilianized Political Leadership. Civilian leadership is more likely to persist

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<sup>2</sup>Higley and Gunther, *Elites and Democratic Consolidation in Latin America and Southern Europe*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992.

<sup>3</sup>Dahl, *Polyarchy*, New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1971.

in its democratic initiative (and not encounter a military reaction) if the democratic opposition tacitly cooperates with the government in creating a peaceful framework for the transition. This path is very vulnerable to an internal coup (e.g., Spain).

Path Four(b). Redemocratization Initiated by "Military-as-Government". The primary drive for a regime end comes from the individual leaders of the military government. The redemocratization effort may falter because of military resistance and no actual transfer of power may occur (e.g., Brazil).

Path Four(c). Redemocratization Led by "Military-as-Institution." The primary motivator for the transition derives from corporate factors of the military-as-institution because the military-as-institution sees the leaders of the authoritarian government carrying out policies that create crises for the military-as-institution. Unless this path is augmented by other factors such as societal pressure, the military may retain several emergency powers (e.g., Greece and Portugal).

III. Oppositional Forces play a key role in terminating and setting the framework for redemocratization.

Path Five. Society-led Regime Termination. Transformation caused by diffuse protests, grass-roots organizations, massive but uncoordinated general strikes, and by general withdrawal of government support. This is a path toward government change rather than a path toward redemocratization (e.g., Greece).

Path Six. Party Pact (With or Without Consociational Elements). The internal construction of a grand oppositional pact is possible with some consociational features. The pact members unite to defeat the authoritarian regime and lay the foundation for a successor democratic regime in which power is more open to most opposition forces (e.g., Chile and Uruguay).

Path Seven. Organized Violent Revolt Coordinated by Democratic Reformist Parties. The revolt against authoritarianism has a party base, therefore, the parties can provide a continuous political direction unavailable to the diffuse society-led path (e.g., Costa Rica).

Path Eight. Marxist-led Revolutionary War. This path has the theoretically predictable potential for fundamental socioeconomic changes because the revolutionary forces come to power only after defeating the state apparatus and a sector of the social order is displaced without waiting for the results of elections (e.g., Nicaragua).

This thesis argues that in 1979, El Salvador followed primarily Path Four(b) and some aspect of Path Five to end the authoritarian regime and ignited the beginning of the

Salvadoran redemocratization process. When Jose Napoleon Duarte<sup>4</sup> was allowed to return from exile and invited to participate in the *Junta Revolucionaria de Gobierno* ( Revolutionary Government Junta) of 1981, El Salvador turned to Path Six as its new redemocratization path.

John Higley and Richard Gunther offered an elite-based approach to explaining democratization, one that helps illuminate the Salvadoran case. Analyzing the roles of elites in recent transitions to democracy in Latin America and Southern Europe, Higley and Gunther concluded that the consolidation of a new democracy required the establishment of elite consensus and unity and extensive mass participation in elections and other institutional processes that make up a procedural democracy. They also argue that the key to the stability and survival of democratic regimes is the establishment of substantial consensus among elites regarding rules of the political "game" including the belief that politics is "bargaining", not "war". From this elite agreement comes a consolidated democracy by which democratic structures and norms are accepted by all civil society. Higley and Gunther concluded that "achieving consolidated democracy depends principally on the choices and skills of elites."<sup>5</sup>

In El Salvador, there has never been a consolidated democracy for two simple reasons. First, there has never been an establishment of substantial consensus among elites regarding rules of the political "game". Second, Salvadoran elites do not believe that government policies are handcrafted for the good of the nation but rather for the good of their own political parties or individual interests. El Salvador moved from a pseudo-democracy (1930-1979) to an unconsolidated democracy (1979-Present). Currently, there is no clear evidence that elites are willing to reach a consensus or to become unified. Salvadoran political actors and organizations do not possess the ability to agree on one national objective.

Dahl's theory is based on the examination of several conditions under which democratized regimes or "polyarchies", as he calls them, exist and can be developed. He gives a list of these conditions and explains how they could influence the development of a polyarchy. These conditions are: the socioeconomic order; historical sequence; equalities

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<sup>4</sup>Jose Napoleon Duarte was one of the founders of the Christian Democratic Party in El Salvador. The military government forced him to leave the country in 1972.

<sup>5</sup>Higley and Gunther, 343.

and inequalities; subcultural pluralism; level of socioeconomic development; foreign powers, and political activism. He stated that all conditions play an important role and, by examining these conditions, one can assess whether a country will establish or maintain a polyarchy.<sup>6</sup> In 1932, Dahl's analysis would undoubtedly have shown the existence of a closed hegemony in El Salvador. From 1982 to 1994, it would be extremely difficult to find all the necessary data to determine the actual status of some of Dahl's conditions. Despite this difficulty, I argue that El Salvador is trying to move toward a polyarchy.

El Salvador case does not present an easy, clear-cut case for testing the adequacy of these three approaches, or for explaining which has the greatest explanatory power. El Salvador has not moved in at least three transitional paths (Stepan); the conditions do not exist in El Salvador to obtain a well-developed "polyarchy" (Dahl); and democratization in El Salvador depends on the choices and skills of elites (Higley and Gunther). I argue that El Salvador's case does not follow one theoretical work because of its unique social, political, economic, and military factors. El Salvador's socioeconomic development relies almost exclusively on its agricultural economy which is based primarily on coffee production. El Salvador does not possess natural resources such as petroleum and natural gas, which makes the Salvadoran Gross National Product dependent on the world coffee market. With the smallest territory and the largest population in Central America, it is extremely difficult for those in power in El Salvador to meet social and economic demands. Moreover, as I will argue in the chapters to follow, El Salvador faced a set of political circumstances that created special impediments to democratization -- impediments that suggest some broader lessons for political development and conflict resolution in Latin America.

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<sup>6</sup>Dahl, 32.

## II. HISTORICAL BACKGROUND (19TH CENTURY - 1984)

To judge whether the 1991 peace accords are likely to create the basis for El Salvador's consolidation of democracy, one must examine the history of political, social, and economic changes in the country from 1870 to 1984. This chapter will examine Stepan's "Paths Toward Redemocratization" theory to show how El Salvador moved from a military regime to an elected government in 1984.

The Conquest turned El Salvador into a country in which Indians worked under various types of authoritarian labor regimes.<sup>7</sup> The Indian population was forced to grow their crops on less-valuable hillsides, while Spaniards inhabited the well-watered land of the valleys. The rapid growth and the affluence of Europe and North America during the late nineteenth century created an increasing demand for coffee. Coffee grew very well on El Salvador's volcanic hillsides and the Indian-populated land suddenly became attractive to the Salvadoran oligarchy (the government). By 1900, the oligarchy, through various legal devices and with organized force, pressured the Indians to leave the hillsides. Under the control of the oligarchy, the National Guard, created in 1912 as a force distinct from the National Army, cleared the Indians from the hillsides. The *campesinos* (lower class), comprising six percent of the population, demanded land and resented land monopolization by the "seven families."<sup>8</sup> The high density of population combined with the lack of valuable land increased the frustration of the Salvadoran people.

Despite the socioeconomic unrest of the country in the 1910s, El Salvador became a nation with a booming economy centered on the monocrop production and exportation of coffee. By 1915, the oligarchy controlled the productive lands, the political apparatus, and the armed forces. National imports were geared toward the needs of the oligarchy rather than toward the development of the nation as a whole.<sup>9</sup> Through the use of the armed forces, the oligarchy managed to maintain its status quo, and the armed forces owed their

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<sup>7</sup>Needler, Martin C., El Salvador: The Military and Politics, University of Michigan Press: Michigan, 1991, p.571.

<sup>8</sup>The "seven families" was the upper class of the country. It was a group of individuals who controlled the economic, and political structure of El Salvador from the commercial revolution of 1870 to the collapse of the oligarchy republic in 1979.

<sup>9</sup>Richard Haggerty, "Historical Setting," El Salvador: A Country Study, ed. Louis Mortimer (Washington D.C., U.S. Govt Printing Office, 1990), 32.



loyalty to them. The government was merely a reflection of the priorities and wishes of the oligarchy.

The desperate economic situation, worsened by falling coffee prices during the worldwide depression of the 1930s, increased the socio-political unrest under the leadership of Augusto Farabundo Marti.<sup>10</sup> With a nonexistent middle class and a large lower class, Marti, in 1932, organized an armed insurrection to overthrow the government. The main goal of the insurrection was to install a Communist regime in the country.<sup>11</sup> In order to defuse Marti's rebellion, President Araujo (the elected civilian president) announced local elections. The elections were opened to opposition parties such as Marti's *Socorro Rojo Internacional* (SRI -Red Aid International) and the *Partido Comunista de El Salvador* (PCES - Communist Party of El Salvador).<sup>12</sup> President Araujo's decision threatened the oligarchy's political control. Responding to oligarchy's demands, the armed forces organized a coup to overthrow President Araujo under the leadership of General Maximiliano Martinez.<sup>13</sup>

President Araujo did not oppose the coup for various reasons. First, the economic crisis of the 1930s and Marti's popular support portrayed a threat to the oligarchy and their goods. Second, the military, traditionally allied with the government and the economic elites, was the most reliable and organized institution to take control of the country's socioeconomic crisis. Finally, with a military government, the oligarchy had the opportunity to influence the Salvadoran economy and government.

In December 1931, General Martinez allowed national elections to take place. Leftist candidates won heavily throughout the rural areas. The elections did not change the political structure of the country, they were simply a tactic to get Marti's supporters into the open. Before they could take office, the *La Matanza* (The Killing) began.<sup>14</sup> Approximately 20,000 Salvadorans died in this incident. Alastair White stated that "military reprisals showed to the rural population that the military was now in control, and that it would brook no challenge to

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<sup>10</sup>Farabundo Marti organized the first Salvadoran communist group in 1921 after the Bolshevik Revolution. In 1932, he transformed this group into the Communist Party of El Salvador.

<sup>11</sup>Richard Haggerty, 15.

<sup>12</sup>Martin C. Needler, "El Salvador: The Military and Politics," University of the Pacific Press: Stockton, 1989, 571.

<sup>13</sup>General Maximiliano Martinez began the era of military dictators in El Salvador that would last for 55 years.

<sup>14</sup>Richard Haggerty, 17.

its rule or to its prevailing system."<sup>15</sup> The Killing served as an object lesson to the Left and other opposition parties when it came to trusting the government, the military, and the electoral process.

Socioeconomic stability characterized the 1940s and 1950s. The military regimes developed an infrastructure that allowed and promoted economic growth and, by the end of 1950s, El Salvador became the most influential nation of the *Mercado Comun Centroamericano* (Central American Common Market).<sup>16</sup> Despite the economic growth, military repression continued in the countryside. Labor and student political activities were banned, along with rights of free expression and assembly. The military regime continued to govern the country with the support and influence of the oligarchy. During the 1960s, the Cuban Revolution gave impetus to Salvadoran instability and worried economic elites and the military alike. From 1932 to 1960, military governments changed either by fraudulent elections or by a "*coup d'etat*" organized by economic elites. Governments were replaced by the oligarchy when they promoted reforms to improve the living standards of the lower and middle classes.

In 1962, national elections took place for the first time since 1932. Only the government party, *Partido Revolucionario de Unificacion Democratica* (PRUD - Democratic Unification Revolutionary Party), had any organization, thereby winning the presidential elections. The first viable opposition party, *Partido Democrata Cristiano* (PDC - Christian Democrat Party), rose from the electorate. The PDC attracted its support with a centrist platform. Jose Napoleon Duarte, a popular political figure and a founder of the PDC, became the leader.<sup>17</sup> Duarte's popularity, visibility, and support of the middle and lower classes allowed him to win the election for mayor of San Salvador.

An economic downturn in the 1960s increased the social unrest culminating in the 1969 "Soccer War" with Honduras. The war dramatically worsened the country's socioeconomic problems when thousands of poor and landless Salvadoran peasants were forcibly returned from the border. The war also increased the problem of overpopulation, land shortages, and unemployment. These and other factors sped the onset of the civil war of the 1980s. In 1970, social unrest met with stepped-up death-squad activities reinforcing

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<sup>15</sup>Alastair White, *El Salvador* (Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 1982), 127.

<sup>16</sup>Richard Haggerty, 128.

<sup>17</sup>Richard Haggerty, 21.

peasants' efforts (with the implicit blessings of the Catholic Church) to organize for self-protection by the procurement of war weapons and the training in guerrilla tactics. Intensified rural demonstrations sprang up and the military government was not in the position, nor inclined, to alleviate the sources of the social unrest.

Opposition parties and the Left took advantage and increased mass demonstrations, primarily through labor union groups. Opposition parties pressed the government for social, economic, and political reforms and demanded the disappearance of the authoritarian regime and the start of a land distribution plan. The government lacked the funds needed to buy the land to be distributed because neither the oligarchy nor the international community approved this agrarian plan.<sup>18</sup> After this unsuccessful event, the renamed government party, *Partido de Conciliación Nacional* (PCN - National Conciliation Party), lost even more rural support and the PDC filled the void with an agrarian reform platform for the upcoming presidential elections.

By 1970, most of the political party or union leaders had gone into exile or hiding due to increasingly repressive military leaders. Popular organizations representing workers, peasants, students or others whose rights needed protection, organized heavily armed clandestine groups to fight the government.<sup>19</sup> In 1972, presidential elections took place to remedy the socio-political crisis. The PDC and other opposition parties united to bring down the military regime.<sup>20</sup>

The elections, as in 1932, destroyed any image of popular democracy, and the legitimacy of the government declined even more. When Duarte, the presidential candidate of the PDC, pulled ahead in the vote, the military closed the tabulating, awarding victory to the PCN candidate. This action demonstrated to opposition leaders that political change could not be reached through the popular vote. With the support of opposition leaders, the Left took advantage of this situation and pressed for revolutionary activities. Other opposition leaders supported the Left's ideals, and they joined the communist struggle.

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<sup>18</sup>Jorge Larde y Larín, *Orígenes de la Fuerza Armada de El Salvador*, San Salvador: Estado Mayor, 1977, 34.

<sup>19</sup>These five clandestine groups united in 1980 to form what is now known as the *Frente Farabundo Martí para la Liberación Nacional* (FMLN).

<sup>20</sup>The most predominant opposition leaders, that joined this political movement, came from the Salvadoran Communist Party. These same elites formed the Frente Democrático Revolucionario (FDR - Revolutionary Democratic Front) and united with the FMLN in 1980. They represented the political side of the FMLN throughout the negotiation process of the 1980s.

The election fraud also sparked a coup, organized by young Army officers, to install Duarte as the elected President. The coup failed because neither Duarte nor the "reformist" officers enjoyed the support of the oligarchy and the high command of the military. Loyal government units quickly moved in and destroyed the coup. Duarte's popularity won him the election, but the lack of oligarchic and military support prevented him from taking office. On the same day that the coup was thwarted, Duarte was accused of being a supporter of Castro's communist ideals and he was forced into exile in Venezuela.

In 1976, Joaquin Villalobos<sup>21</sup> stated:

Tensions rose to unmanageable levels as new actors demanded genuinely free elections, and the right to free expression and political participation. When military personnel responded to these demands with violent repression, the country was set on the path to the civil war.<sup>22</sup>

The government continued to use violent force against its citizens to stay in power. According to Villalobos, "the people in 1975, as a logical justification to insurrection, decided that if the state can use violence to maintain itself in power then the people have the right to use the same measures to express their political beliefs."<sup>23</sup> The socio-political crisis, the unstable economy, the clandestine armed groups supported by the Catholic Church, and the lack of government legitimacy during the 1970s ignited the civil war. There was nothing that the military government could have done to stop the development of the left-wing insurgency.

In 1977, left-wing insurgencies intensified their efforts to unbalance the government through a range of mass demonstrations in San Salvador. The military, backed by the oligarchy, tried to stop the country crisis with repressive actions, but the socioeconomic unrest increased even more. In an attempt to alleviate the situation, presidential elections were announced for 1977. It was too late; the country was set on the path to civil war.

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<sup>21</sup> Joaquin Villalobos is the leader of the *Expresion Renovadora del Pueblo* (ERP - Peoples' Reformist Expression), which is one of the five factions of the FMLN.

<sup>22</sup> Enrique A. Baloyra, "Salvaging El Salvador," *Journal of Democracy* 3, 2 (April 1992), 79.

<sup>23</sup> Joaquin Villalobos, "A Democratic Revolution for El Salvador," *Foreign Policy* 74 (Spring '89) : 120.

#### A. CIVIL WAR ESCALATION PERIOD (1979 - 1984)

With the successful development of the left-wing insurgency in the 1970s, the national situation worsened day by day. The insurgency gained full control of the masses and their organizations. Mass demonstrations in San Salvador increased and the government was unable to stop them. Leftist-oriented groups centered on the *Bloque Popular Revolucionario* (BPR - Popular Revolutionary Bloc), and the church-sponsored *Comunidades Eclesiasticas de Base* (CEB - Christian Base Communities). These groups actively promoted mass discontent and violence. Villalobos said that "the rise of the Salvadoran revolutionary movement coincides historically with the Roman Catholic Church's turn toward a greater commitment to social justice."<sup>24</sup> This social justice doctrine was known as the *Teologia para la Liberacion* (Liberation Theology). Anti-government violence also grew by way of the armed Left with the *Ejercito Revolucionario del Pueblo* (ERP - People's Revolutionary Army) and the *Fuerzas Populares de Liberacion* (FPL - Popular Liberation Forces). These two organizations became the most active and violent insurgent groups of the 1970s and 1980s. Anti-government activities gave rise to the right-wing death squads whose primary targets were the identifiable religious and CEB leaders. A vicious cycle of violence from both sides plagued the nation.

The presidential elections of 1977 attempted to alleviate the national crisis but another electoral sham took place. General Humberto Romero, the PCN presidential candidate, came to power and violence erupted in San Salvador in protest against the fraudulent vote. Approximately 20 to 30 Salvadorans died in these activities. These killings further polarized Salvadoran political elites and provided a propaganda advantage to the Left. Martin E. Anderson writes that "the process of extreme polarization alarmed those political actors who saw the old regime of oligarchy and military domination as no longer workable but who feared the consequences of a successful Communist led revolt."<sup>25</sup>

In August 1979, the *Foro Popular* (Popular Forum), formed by young military officers, centrist politicians and progressive members of the business community, formulated a plan to remove General Romero. In October 1979, a coup removed Romero's government and established a reformist civil-military junta. The junta was formed by one businessman, one

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<sup>24</sup>Joaquin Villalobos : 120.

<sup>25</sup> Andersen, "The Military Obstacle To Latin American Democracy," *Foreign Policy*, 73 (Winter 1989) : 109.

representative of the Catholic University, one Social Democratic leader, and two well-known and respected military officers.<sup>26</sup>

Despite the efforts of the junta to promote reforms, the Left continued to exert its influence over the masses and created an environment of uncertainty against the junta. The 1979 Sandinista revolution in Nicaragua gave the Left further impetus in their armed struggle and increased their commitment to impose a communist regime in the country. Although the military broke its alliance with the oligarchy after the coup, it continued to influence and counter the junta's reforms. The junta delivered an ultimatum to the military, demanding that the armed forces recognize civilian control. This ultimatum was rejected and, as a result, the junta resigned in the first week of 1980.

The same week, another junta took power. The leadership of the new junta came from the Christian Democratic party.<sup>27</sup> Duarte's return from exile caused further distrust by far right-wing elements in the military. Duarte's involvement in this junta was viewed "as an opportunity to establish a political center in El Salvador, and to make a transition to a genuinely democratic system."<sup>28</sup> At the end of 1980, a coup was planned against the junta by a right-wing officer by the name of Roberto D'Aubuisson, who tried to incite political unrest among a group of young officers. He became the founder of the right-wing party *Alianza Republicana Nacionalista* (ARENA - Republican Nationalist Alliance) in 1983. The coup was forestalled by the vigorous intervention of the United States.

By February 1980, the threat of the Left increased and several prominent PDC leaders who argued against military intervention in the junta were killed and the junta broke apart in protest. The junta was replaced by a third. Duarte became the leader of this group and wrestled with the conflicting problems facing the regime. In March 1980, the assassination of politically-active Archbishop Amulfo Romero and the killing of demonstrators at his funeral by security forces, increased the social-political unrest of the country. International press coverage of these events further polarized what remained of the political center and prompted the United States to cut what little military aid the country was receiving. This U.S. attitude encouraged the campaign of the Left, which drew parallels with

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<sup>26</sup>These three officers represented the conservative and moderate sides of the armed forces, even though two of them joined the FMLN in 1980.

<sup>27</sup>Jose Napoleon Duarte returned from exile with the help of the United States and other opposition parties.

<sup>28</sup>Enrique Baloyra, El Salvador in Transition, University of North Carolina: Chapel Hill, NC, 1982, p. 98.

Nicaragua. The Salvadoran government and the armed forces sought to counter the Nicaraguan example, and in December 1980 conservative elements in the military supported a new junta. The new mission of the military became to counterattack by all means available the uprising of the leftist insurgency.

During these reformist juntas of 1979-1980, mass demonstrations continued and the social unrest escalated as the government tried to carry out new reforms. The Left's military apparatus grew steadily through Cuban/Soviet arms shipments via Nicaragua. By 1979, leftist groups were divided and continued to operate under their own agendas. However, in 1980, the Left united in order to continue to receive support from its communist allies. The process of unifying the Left began in May 1980 with the direct involvement and assistance of Fidel Castro who united the factions under the banner of the *Dirección Revolucionaria Unificada* (DRU - Unified Revolutionary Directorate), the *Coordinadora Revolucionaria* (Revolutionary Coordinator) and the *Frente Democrático Revolucionario* (FDR - Democratic Revolutionary Front).<sup>29</sup>

By the end of 1980, the FMLN had moved to the countryside and developed a new strategy to shatter the nation's agriculture-based economy by burning coffee, cotton, and sugarcane plantations. The FMLN pressed to take over the government by force and promoted violent mass demonstrations to support its military actions. The military tried, with its few available resources, to counterattack the FMLN-FDR. In January 1981, the FMLN, with the support of its communist allies, organized the *Ofensiva Final* (Final Offensive) which proved to be both positive and negative for the insurgents. Negative, because they did not receive the massive rural support which they needed to succeed. Positive, because the insurgents showed their military strength and their ability to control territory. However, the Armed Forces, with scarce resources, counterattacked and managed to control the situation. After the offensive, the French and Mexican governments recognized the FMLN as a "representative" political force, which gave strength to the FMLN because its socio-political goals had international support.

The timing of the FMLN offensive was not coincidental. Their intentions were to take over the government before Ronald Reagan took office in the United States. The Carter administration hoped to influence the situation with his human rights policy and end the spread and escalation of violence. Human rights violations committed by the government

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<sup>29</sup>Alan Riding, "The Central American Quagmire," *Foreign Affairs*, 61, 3: 644.

in the 1970s led the Carter administration to reduce economic aid.<sup>30</sup> Aggressive actions of the Left in 1979, along with Carter's fear of "losing" El Salvador (as he had "lost" Nicaragua), led the Carter administration to renew its military aid to the Salvadoran government. Carter lost the election and Ronald Reagan moved into the White House in January 1980.

Reagan's priority was to counter the perceived domino effect in Central America. Therefore, he gave expanded military aid to El Salvador under the Reagan Doctrine which called for total support to any nation fighting against communist expansion. El Salvador received massive economic assistance geared to restore the losses caused by the sabotage from the guerrillas and legitimize the government through the electoral process. As with Carter, Reagan knew the PDC would be the most appropriate party by which to build political consensus for the Salvadoran democratic process. The United States believed that the Christian Democrats could influence the supporters of both the Left and the Right.

By 1981, Salvadoran elites and the armed forces recognized that U.S. support was necessary to survive the civil war. On the other hand, the Left, with the help of the communist community through Nicaragua, strengthened their position. The FMLN developed a new strategy, *Guerra Popular Prolongada* (Prolonged Popular War), which sought to prolong the war, thereby forcing the U.S. Congress to compel Reagan to pull out. In December 1981, congressional elections were scheduled for March 1982. The 1982 election brought new political actors and sparked the beginning of a transition to democracy. Six parties participated in the election, but only three received significant popular support: the PCN government party, Duarte's PDC, and the newly organized ARENA.

Despite the effort of the government to promote political participation, the Left refused to participate, citing security concerns. Instead, the Left tried unsuccessfully to sabotage the elections. After the legislative elections of 1982, an apolitical president came to power named Alvaro Magana. The Salvadoran people realized that El Salvador's reconciliation would come in the polls and not on the battlefield. Despite the nationalistic demonstration, the Left believed that the elections were a "tool of the Right" to impose control in the country and maintained their belief that an armed struggle was the best way to obtain their objectives.

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<sup>30</sup>Harold Molineu, *U.S. Foreign Policy Toward Latin America: From Regionalism to Globalism*, (Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 1990), 219.



The electoral result took Washington by surprise because, while the United States supported the PDC, the PCN and ARENA won a plurality of votes<sup>31</sup> and garnered a majority in the Constituent Assembly. With 68% of the population voting, the final count showed ARENA and the PCN with a combined 36 representative and the PDC with 24.<sup>32</sup> The United States feared that ARENA and the PCN would control the Assembly and draft a new constitution in support of Rightist ideals. This never occurred. Instead, political elites tried to work together, at least in theory, to pull the country out of the crisis.

Fighting did not diminish after the 1982 elections, even though the FMLN, while not participating in the elections, called for negotiations. They demanded a "power sharing" position in the government and the armed forces. Despite the desire of the FMLN-FDR to negotiate, the fighting intensified. Cuba responded by sending more sophisticated weapons -- Soviet Rocket Launchers, and high power antiaircraft rifles (Dragonoff). In response, Reagan increased military aid from \$50.0 million in 1983 to \$62.0 million in 1984.<sup>33</sup> The Salvadoran government refused to negotiate and the military hoped to make tactical progress against the FMLN on the battlefield. The United States did not press for a negotiated settlement in the early 1980s; instead, it continued to promote the legitimacy of the Salvadoran government and to strengthen its democratic ideals.

With the rising military and economic support to both sides, the civil war slipped into a stalemate. While the Left was committed to civil war, the United States pushed the Salvadoran government to legitimate its power through elections. In 1983, to undermine the FMLN-FDR, the Salvadoran government announced presidential elections for 1984. Presidential election and the transition to a civilian president were the price El Salvador had to pay for U.S. assistance. Jose Napoleon Duarte, actively supported by U.S. financing, won the 1984 election in a runoff against the ARENA candidate.

## B. ANALYSIS

El Salvador was not a case of redemocratization in 1979 because it lacked a democratic history. Behind the democratic facade of 1912 to 1979, El Salvador was an oligarchy-military authoritarianism republic in which political competition took place only

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<sup>31</sup>ARENA gathered the majority of the votes from the middle and lower classes.

<sup>32</sup> Richard Haggerty, 246.

<sup>33</sup>Richard Haggerty, 249.

among economic elites, the lower class was too big and too dependent upon coffee revenues to promote reforms, and the armed forces repressed any disaffection on the part of the Salvadoran people. The oligarchy republic needed the presence of the military as government and as institution to survive.

From 1932 to 1979, there was little room, if any, for political expression. The expansion of the middle class in the 1970s and their frustration over the lack of free elections forced the military officers to mediate between the demands of the oligarchy and the middle class. These events, combined with a weak economy, set the stage for the cycle of violence of the 1970s and the civil war. Social discontent prompted the need for political expression, which threatened the position of the military and the oligarchy. The military tried to undermine this need through repressive actions.

In 1972, El Salvador attempted Stepan's Path Six (Party Pact), when Duarte and other opposition parties united to end the military regime in the presidential elections of 1972. The power and imposition of the military regime overshadowed their efforts. Many political analysts believe that if Duarte had taken office after the elections of 1972, El Salvador's civil war would have never erupted. Joaquin Villalobos' 1991 statement contradicted this analysis. He said that "even if radical changes had taken place in El Salvador before 1979, the Salvadoran left-wing commanders and the International Communist Community believed that a Marxist-Leninist revolution was the only viable solution to the Salvadoran crisis."<sup>34</sup>

In 1979, El Salvador again tried to find a path to democracy. The nation followed two of Stepan's paths. The first was Stepan's Path 5 (Society-led Regime Termination). El Salvador's society under the leadership of the FMLN-FDR and other opposition parties diffused massive violent demonstrations. To counterattack this action, the "military-as-government" reacted with repressive action with the use of the military-as-institution. This situation brought Stepan's Path Four(c) (Redemocratization led by "Military-as-Institution") into play. Young Army officers organized the coup of 1979 to overthrow the military-as-government because they believed that the military regime carried out policies that harmed the military-as-institution. The military system collapsed in 1979 because of persistent electoral fraud, stagnant economic growth, and the increased viability of those groups, driven by repression, who opted for revolutionary strategies. With civilian participation in the 1979

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<sup>34</sup>Speech given by Joaquin Villalobos at a Round-Table Conference "Peace and Reconciliation in El Salvador," sponsored by U.S. Army War College and The Democracy Projects, School of International Service of the American University, 8-9 September 1994.

junta, the country returned to Stepan's Path Six (Party Pact). Opposition parties with the military institution united to lay the foundation for a more democratic regime.

The Salvadoran civil war was generated by socio-political factors. The FMLN-FDR justified their actions by saying that civil war was the solution to these problems. The social objectives of the civil war were to favor the unprotected lower and the new middle classes and to fight against the monopolization of power by the oligarchy. The political objectives were to liberate the electoral process and political competition and to carry out the right of the people to choose their own government.<sup>35</sup> During the 1970s, social objectives prevailed over political ones.

The armed insurrection of 1932 and the civil war of 1979 developed with the purpose of promoting socio-political changes. However, Salvadorans believed that eventually the solutions to these problems were to be found, not in the blood of the people, but over a negotiating table.

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<sup>35</sup>The diversity of political ideals came from the diversity of thinking among the factions of the FMLN. Some of the factions reflected well-marked Marxist-Leninist ideals, while others faction represented more social-democratic ideologies.

### III. THE PEACE PROCESS (1981 - 16 JANUARY 1992)

#### A. INTRODUCTION

This chapter analyzes how different international and national variables affected the outcome of President Duarte (1981-1988) and President Cristiani (1989-1992) negotiation period. Examination of Gunther and Higley's theory on *Elite Transformation and Democratic Regimes* will also be used to explain the elite settlement of December 1991.

In the early 1980s, it was unimaginable that El Salvador's armed conflict would end with a consensus in favor of nonviolence, a political settlement, democratic norms, and respect for human rights. It was also unimaginable that both parties could overcome the obstacles that had permanently separated them and agree to a genuine peace settlement. If one is to analyze how the peace accords of 1992 were signed, one must look at them in light of their stunning improbability.

In 1984, President Jose Napoleon Duarte began a formal negotiation process with the FMLN-FDR to bring all Salvadorans together to find a peaceful solution to the armed conflict. Over a period of four years, President Duarte tried unsuccessfully to consolidate the peace talks.

When Alfredo Cristiani, the candidate of the right-wing ARENA party, was elected president in March 1989, many observers feared that hope for El Salvador's peace and democracy had to be postponed, if not abandoned. In his inaugural speech, President Cristiani belied those fears and indicated that he, personally, wanted a political settlement with the FMLN. A series of wide-ranging negotiations between Cristiani's government and the FMLN began in early 1989 and culminated with the peace accord signed in Mexico City on 16 January 1992. These accords eliminated most of the controversial Salvadoran political problems and established a stable democratic system in accord with the rules of law.

#### B. ANALYSIS

Gunther and Higley argue that conflict resolution can be reached by "... the establishment of an elite consensus and unity, as well as extensive mass participation in the elections, and other institutional processes that constitutes a procedural democracy."<sup>36</sup> What differentiates each negotiating process are the disparate internal and/or external variables

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<sup>36</sup>Gunther and Higley, 9.

that influence the outcome of the process (the negotiation parties, political society, civil society, the military, international organizations and/or actors, etc.).

In El Salvador, two negotiation periods took place: President Duarte's Negotiations (1981-1988), and President Cristiani's Negotiations (1989-1992). These periods had some critical differences in terms of political circumstances and the negotiating strategies of the parties to the Salvadoran conflict.

#### 1. President Duarte's Negotiations (1981-1988)

Many historians and political analysts do not recognize that the Peace Process in El Salvador began during Duarte's junta (1981). The negotiating process began after the FMLN's unsuccessful armed insurrection of 1981 because it prompted the insurgents to formulate a political strategy to reach their socio-political objectives. After the FMLN's offensive, the social and political life of El Salvador changed profoundly. The war erupted, and Salvadoran and international elites began to seek alternatives to end the civil war. Because of this, the FMLN's General Command and its allies from the FDR developed a new strategy called *Solucion Politica* (Political Solution).

The FMLN-FDR demanded an honest dialogue with the government, a conditional cease fire, and the surrender of weapons by both sides. The FMLN-FDR also demanded the involvement of all factions of the FMLN-FDR's alliance in the negotiation process, the presence of International observers, and a complete discussion regarding all aspects of the Salvadoran situation. The issues to be discussed were: (1) the establishment of a new political, economic, and judicial order that would permit the participation of all Salvadoran society; and (2) a new structure of the armed forces.

The Mexican and French governments and the *Social-Democrata Internacional* (Social-Democrat International) supported the FMLN-FDR's political solution. The issues of the peace talks were included in the FMLN-FDR's agenda presented to the United Nations in October 1981 through the *Coordinador General de la Junta de Nicaragua* (General Coordinator of the Nicaraguan Junta), Daniel Ortega. This agenda disqualified the legitimacy of any popular election while the nation was involved in an internal war.<sup>37</sup> The FMLN argued that the country did not possess the minimum conditions to protect either human rights or the free political expression of the Salvadorans. In 1981, Duarte also developed a negotiation alternative, *Elecciones Libres y Solucion Militar* (Free Elections and Military

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<sup>37</sup>The FMLN was referring to the upcoming congressional elections of 1982.

Solution). This alternative, supported by U.S. government, had two intentions: to promote internal and international consensus toward the Salvadoran government, and to obtain legitimacy for those military operations destined to stop the FMLN-FDR's revolution. During 1981 to 1984, neither the Left nor the government complied with their negotiation proposals to end the armed conflict.

Duarte's election in 1984 spawned a new era of peace negotiations. With the support of the military and the involvement of all segments of society, President Duarte invited the FMLN-FDR to the negotiating table to discuss the end of the Salvadoran armed conflict. Of all Duarte's meetings, the most important was the meeting in La Palma in 1984 because, for the first time, the government and the FMLN-FDR came together to debate over a negotiating table. The rest of Duarte's meetings were merely a continuation of the one in La Palma.

What caused the failure of Duarte's negotiating efforts? The answer to this question is found in an examination of the national and international variables that influenced the outcome of the negotiation process.

## **2. National Variables**

The government kept an open, flexible, and enthusiastic attitude throughout the negotiations to promote successful peace talks between both parties. Despite the unsuccessful outcome, Duarte had many political triumphs, such as the accords to "humanize" the conflict,<sup>38</sup> the exchange of prisoners, and the declaration of amnesty during the civil war.<sup>39</sup> But, the government fell short in their efforts to create a trusting environment and a dynamic peace process in which both sides felt comfortable with the other's negotiating positions. This distrust was promoted by the presence of U.S. military advisers in the country, the influence of national and international actors in the government's decision-making process, and the divided position of the FMLN. Duarte's final achievement was the signing of the Esquipulas II Accords in 1987, that later changed the context of the negotiation process.<sup>40</sup>

The position of the FMLN-FDR's negotiating commission was divided, unprofessional, and very negative throughout the peace talks. The FMLN wanted a military

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<sup>38</sup>See Appendix A., the meeting of Ayagualo, 1984.

<sup>39</sup>See Appendix A., meeting of Caracas, 1987.

<sup>40</sup>See Appendix A., 7.

solution and the FDR wanted a diplomatic-political solution. These two tendencies prevailed every time they came to the negotiating table and, without a doubt, the FMLN and the FDR promoted each other's position. This attitude was seen for the first time after the unsuccessful meeting of Sesori in 1986.<sup>41</sup>

With the threat of the Marxist-Leninist insurgents, the military institution took a different role during Duarte's administration. When the communist movement grew stronger daily, the armed forces focused on defending the sovereignty of the nation. The presence of the military in the negotiating meetings did not interfere with the outcome of each meeting because they were acting only as military advisers to the president.

In 1986, high ranking officers<sup>42</sup> decided to analyze the crisis. Their analysis examined those factors that had led to the civil war. Their conclusion was that the national crisis had developed through a breakdown of social norms, which created a profound social disorder. This social disorder created a fragile socio-political and economic system -- poverty, social injustice, electoral fraud, repression, etc. All these elements promoted violence, social disintegration and, as a result, civil war. With this in mind, the military advised the president that a democratic system was the solution to the nation's crisis and recommended reforms to the political, social, economic, and military structures. The armed forces stated that the solution to the armed conflict would not come through a military solution, but through a negotiated solution.

Salvadoran civil society has traditionally supported those political parties or institutions that promoted profound social and political change. The FMLN took advantage of this and used part of the Salvadoran society to promote idealistic movements and demonstrations, moving the people through the *Ejercito Político de Masas* (Army of Political Masses) to create a unstable socio-political environment. The FMLN used the masses every time they felt threatened by the negotiating process.<sup>43</sup> When President Duarte invited the FMLN to negotiate, most of the civil society approved this decision for one reason -- they wanted the civil war to end.

The government allowed the Church to participate in the negotiation process. They played the role of mediator in the negotiations and formulated and developed schedules,

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<sup>41</sup>See Appendix A. for more detail (Sesori, 1986).

<sup>42</sup>General Adolfo O. Blandon, former Chairman of the Joint Chief Staff (1984-1988), and his staff.

<sup>43</sup>See Appendix A., 6.

agendas and conditions for each party before they came to the negotiating table, and offered proposals to overcome the negotiation barriers and to facilitate improvements in the peace talks.

### **3. International Factors**

El Salvador was caught in the snowball effect created by the West-East confrontation. The Cold War, which had fueled the continuity of the civil war, came to a dead end. The endless support of the Communist Community and the European Union for the FMLN and the millions of dollars in support from the United States created a stalemate. These factors will be furthered discussed in this chapter.

### **4. Reasons for Failure**

The only element that truly wanted an end to the armed conflict was the Salvadoran people. Salvadoran lives had paid the cost of the civil war and, by the end of Duarte's term, more than 40,000 people had died as a result of the civil war.

However, the solution to the armed conflict during Duarte's administration was not found because the negotiating commission of the Left was a vicious circle of internal disputes between the FMLN and the FDR, making their position unclear and uncertain over the negotiating table. The armed conflict became part of the West-East confrontation, causing the war to come to a stalemate. Neither the government, with the United States, nor the FMLN, with the Communist Community, wanted to give up their commitment to the military solution. The FMLN-FDR was not cooperative; instead, they tried to compete against the government. They did not admit their internal conflict, failed to agree on joint solutions, and failed to view the armed conflict as a joint problem. Most of the political society stayed out of the picture, leaving the government party, the PDC, alone in the political struggle. Neither elite consensus nor unity occurred during this period.

### **5. President Cristiani's Negotiation Period (1989-1992)**

When Cristiani came to Office in 1989, many political events were taking place around the world that created a successful negotiating environment. Some of these events were the fall of the Berlin Wall; Gorbachev's controversial Perestroika; the election of President George Bush; and the beginning of the end of the Cold War. During the first year of the ARENA Government, the negotiation process experienced major changes. In his inaugural speech, President Cristiani promised the Salvadoran people that his government would stop the unjust and bloody war. He also offered to immediately resume the peace



talks with an adequate negotiation method and within a constitutional framework, as previously outlined by Duarte. Cristiani proposed five negotiation points:<sup>44</sup>

1. To analyze feasible mechanisms to impel a permanent, and serious debate between the democratic sector and the FMLN-FDR.
2. To create a government dialogue commission with democratic personalities. This commission would contact those persons designated by FMLN to formulate a work plan. Also, they would discuss the necessary aspects to achieve the incorporation of all social sectors to the democratic process, and the mechanisms for a better representative democracy.
3. Once the debate started, it could not cease unilaterally by any motive; until a concrete solution to the conflict was presented to any organization of higher political decision (i.e., the United Nation or the OAS).
4. The Government, in all the stages of the negotiation process, would be in constant conference with national socio-political forces.
5. To propose that the peace talks take place outside El Salvador, especially in other Central American nation.

Cristiani's dialogue was similar to that of former President Duarte. The difference was that Cristiani's negotiation procedures made the peace talks more dynamic and flexible to agreement. Additionally, this framework allowed for popular acceptance of a political solution and participation by both parties. As a result, the peace talks resumed in 1989.

If the procedures and proposals were almost identical to those used by Duarte, why was Duarte unsuccessful and Cristiani successful? The answer to this question also lies in the national and international variables that influenced the outcome of Cristiani's peace process.

#### **6. National Variables**

National and international organizations feared that Cristiani's government would reject a political solution to the conflict and push for a military victory. Cristiani's 1989 inauguration speech confirmed his desire to negotiate with the FMLN. Cristiani convinced the far-right, the FMLN moderates, and the United States that he was sincere, honest, and capable of imposing his political decisions. His attitude motivated the FMLN to come to the negotiating table, but they still had doubts about his right-wing political tendencies.

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<sup>44</sup>La Prensa Grafica Newspaper, San Salvador: El Salvador, 16 June 1989, 1.

Cristiani recognized that El Salvador's economic hopes for recovery were tied to U.S. Congressional support. Therefore, he and his government continued to push for a political solution. Cristiani knew that a political settlement was the only way to continue to receive economic aid from the United States even when political and military events challenged the peace talks (the offensives of 1989 and 1990).<sup>45</sup>

Important changes also occurred in the FMLN-FDR. In 1988, the leadership of the FMLN began to seriously evaluate its military-political goals and strategies. The events that triggered this self-analysis were the chaotic insurgent offensive of 1989 and the negative outcome obtained by FMLN's delegates, who visited different countries to reinforce support for their cause (Mexico, France, Nicaragua, and Cuba). The message to the FMLN was that a military victory was far from imminent and that the FMLN should adopt and stay supportive of a political settlement. Internally, the FMLN realized that their military power and political influence was declining.

The fall of the Berlin Wall, the economic changes under Mikhail Gorbachev, and the crumbling of the Marxist-Leninist political system also sparked two changes in the FMLN. First, Joaquin Villalobos said that "the rebels were not dogmatic socialists but were demanding resolutions to the country's problems within a Western style democracy."<sup>46</sup> This statement gave way to a drastic shift in the ideological perspective and direction of the FMLN General Command. Second, Soviet international policies shifted extremely when the Soviet government said that it would not continue to support any revolutionary movements. This gave even more reasons for the FMLN to question their capability to continue their military operations. Villalobos' modified position showed an idealistic division within the FMLN's General Command. Two examples of this division were that: (1) the FMLN openly defied Villalobos' attitude and continued its military operations; and (2) the negotiation process was seen by some FMLN commanders as a political instrument to prolong the war, and for others as a way to obtain full power of the government.

Military actions, such as the offensives of 1989 and 1990, showed the government that the FMLN-FDR was negotiating from a position of strength. Clearly, the FMLN continued to use military action every time their interests were threatened by the peace process (i.e., the offensive of 1989). When the armed forces made efforts to stop the escalation of the

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<sup>45</sup>See Appendix A., the Dialogue Efforts after the Offensive, page 34, and the Offensive of November 1990, 45.

<sup>46</sup>Joaquin Villalobos, 45.

civil war, the FMLN took a harder and less flexible position over the negotiating table. They retaliated by pressing the issue of the purge and reduction of the armed forces.<sup>47</sup> This caused uncertainty and confrontation between the two negotiating commissions and created a stalemate in the peace talks.

Changes also took place in the military. There was a philosophical split within the military between moderates who showed flexibility toward the peace talks and others who looked at the negotiations as a sign of weakness. This split became evident after the signing of San Jose I, II, and III in July-September 1990.<sup>48</sup> Despite this division, the armed forces recognized that a conflict resolution must have a social basis and that a military victory was far from materializing. Consequently, the military institution established its final strategy of the war -- to reach a peaceful solution to the armed conflict and support the government in their efforts to end the civil war over the negotiating table. A military commission advised the government on issues related to the armed forces. However, it was extremely difficult to defend the military institution when it made such tremendous errors during the last years of the civil war.<sup>49</sup> These errors put the armed forces in a weak negotiation position.

Civil society evolved as well. The FMLN continued their efforts to mobilize the masses. They created the *Comité Permanente del Debate Nacional* (CPDN - Permanent Committee of the National Debate) in an attempt to bring in all those national organizations that had rejected their communist ideologies in the past years. This committee also sought to promote civil society's involvement in the negotiated settlement through violent demonstrations. Most of the Salvadoran civil society had a different view. They went to the polls on five different occasions (1989-1991) and believed that military actions were not the appropriate solution to the socio-political problems of the country. Salvadorans reaffirmed this position after the 1989 Offensive when they did not support the FMLN's armed insurrection in San Salvador. By 1990, after the armed offensive in November, most of the Salvadoran people pushed the government and the FMLN to end the armed conflict through a peaceful debate.

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<sup>47</sup>See Appendix A., the meeting of Oaxtepec, 19 June 1990.

<sup>48</sup>See Appendix A., the Negotiation Proposals in San Jose.

<sup>49</sup>The assassination of the Jesuit priests in San Salvador, and the alleged corruption among high ranking officers.

During this period the Church was replaced in its role of mediator by the United Nations. The Catholic Church opted to support the Left and the CPDN. Other religious leaders from the Lutheran and Christian Churches also supported the position of the Catholic Church. These religious leaders openly accused the government and the armed forces of being against the peace talks. They also promoted international support for the FMLN's military operations, although they never admitted this posture and denied any direct connection with the Leftist insurgents. In sum, the Church did little to improve the negotiation process. Instead, the Church caused aggravation by their negative attitude toward the peace talks.

Opposition parties came to support the negotiating position of the FMLN and pushed for the inclusion of political reforms in the peace accords. The government obtained limited support, but managed to convince the opposition parties that it was trying to attain political and judicial reforms in the accords. Political society played a vital and significant role throughout this negotiation period. The most relevant took place in September 1990 with the Inter-Party Dialogue Commission agreement, which asked for a revision of the rules governing the March 1991 legislative and municipal elections. These changes expanded the size of the legislative assembly from sixty to eighty-four seats and created more openings for leftist candidates. The Salvadoran political society supported the negotiations in April 1991 and proposed a constructive formula for the role and function of the truth commission, and stood together to ward off FMLN efforts to change the procedures for constitutional amendment.<sup>50</sup>

## **7. International Factors**

In January 1984, the Kissinger Commission report<sup>51</sup> provided a consensus framework for U.S. policy toward El Salvador. The report had different political emphases within Washington, D.C. (Congress stressed human rights considerations and the Reagan administration emphasized support for the Salvadoran armed forces). This consensus held until 1989 when new administrations took office in El Salvador and the United States. The Bush administration clearly announced to the Salvadoran government that a negotiated solution was the only way to stop the armed conflict.

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<sup>50</sup>La Prensa Grafica Newspaper, San Salvador, El Salvador, June 13, 1991, p. 1.

<sup>51</sup>The Kissinger Commission report of 1984 (the National Bipartisan Commission on Central America) favored the State Department strategy: El Salvador was important to U.S. interest; a victory of the FMLN was unacceptable; fighting the guerrillas should be left to the Salvadoran armed forces, with heavy U.S. financing.

After the Leftist offensive of 1989, the United States also admitted that the civil war did not have a military solution. Assistant Secretary of State Bernard W. Aronson stated at a Congressional hearing that "El Salvador needs peace, and the only path to peace is at the negotiating table."<sup>52</sup> Those words showed a significant shift in U.S. position toward the Salvadoran armed conflict. Aronson recognized that the Reagan policy of isolating the FMLN militarily had failed and that it was time to pursue peace through dialogue. Many other United States officials agreed with Aronson. In testimony before the Senate, Secretary of State James A. Baker, III, stated that "in El Salvador, we believe that this is the year to end the war through a negotiated settlement that will guarantee a safe political space for all Salvadorans."<sup>53</sup> A week later, General Maxwell R. Thurman, Commander-in-Chief of the U.S. Southern Command, endorsed talks between the Salvadoran government and the FMLN to end the civil war, and stated his belief that the parties were on that course.<sup>54</sup>

The turnabout in U.S. policy toward El Salvador was accomplished by Congress in 1990, after the United Nations committed itself to play a major role in the negotiated settlement of the Salvadoran civil war in April 1990. Consequently, in October 1990, the U.S. Congress 1990 tied any military and economic aid to El Salvador not only to human rights issues, but to progress in the negotiation process. After this shift in U.S. policy, both sides tried to sell their positions to the U.S. Government and to other governments around the world. Cristiani's administration tried to distance itself from the right-wing party foundation and said they were committed to a negotiated solution. The FMLN offered to talk and to moderate their negotiation position. The Bush administration, at the end of 1980 and the beginning of 1990, put El Salvador on the back burner, due to events in Panama and Nicaragua. Events in the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe occupied the spotlight of U.S. foreign policy. In the end, the United States government played a helpful but tangential role in support of the negotiation process.

Changes in the former Soviet Union played a larger role. In January 1989, the former Soviet Union announced to the FMLN that they could not afford military and economic aid

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<sup>52</sup>Assistant Secretary of State Aronson, prepared statement before the House Foreign Affairs Subcommittee on Western Hemispheric Affairs, January 24, 1990, 5.

<sup>53</sup>Secretary of State Baker, prepared statement before the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, "U.S. Foreign Policy Priorities and FY 1991 Budget Request," Current Policy No. 1245 (Washington, D.C.: Bureau of Public Affairs, U.S. Department of State, February 1, 1990), 5.

<sup>54</sup>Testimony of General Thurman, Commander-in-Chief, U.S. Southern Command, stenographic transcript of hearing before the Committee on Armed Services, U.S. Senate, February 8, 1990.

and that the FMLN should pursue negotiations with the Salvadoran government.<sup>55</sup> Glasnost (political reforms) and Perestroika (economic reforms) seemed to reinforce this trend. Mikhail Gorbachev's determination to improve relations with the United States prompted a dynamic withdrawal from Central America. The Soviets halted arms shipments to the Nicaraguan government in January 1989 and called on the FMLN to seek support from Western nations. This convinced the FMLN to come over to the negotiating table.

During the offensive of 1989, the FMLN competed with the collapse of the Soviet empire for world attention. The Eastern bloc was moving away from totalitarian regimes and centralized economies. Cuba, a key FMLN ally, was becoming increasingly isolated from its communist allies and the Soviet Union's new thinking was prompting the FMLN to moderate its ideologies even further. The November 1989 Malta summit showed Washington, D.C. how far Moscow was willing to go to assure that it was not militarily supporting the FMLN. According to a French news report in late November 1989, the Soviets told Cuban and Nicaraguan high-ranking officials to stop supplying arms to the FMLN.<sup>56</sup> After the Malta summit, President Bush accepted Soviet claims that they were not directly supplying the FMLN and were pressuring their allies to stop arms shipments to El Salvador.<sup>57</sup>

The United Nations also played an important role. Throughout the negotiation process, the U.N. was actively involved and acted, at least in theory, as an impartial arbitrator. They helped negotiate the schedule that covered the actual implementation phase of the accords and set the deadline for the signing of the accords. ONUSAL (United Nations Observer Mission in El Salvador) would have the role of overseeing and supervising the implementation phase of the peace accords.

Central American nations recognized that the future of the region lay in economic development and not in military disputes. The five Central American presidents, at a meeting in early December 1989, significantly strengthened President Cristiani's political position. For the first time, Nicaraguan President Daniel Ortega recognized the legitimacy of the Cristiani government. Violeta Chamorro's election in 1990 also impacted the negotiation process. A new government in Nicaragua increased the pressures on the FMLN to agree on laying

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<sup>55</sup>Washington Post, January 24, 1989, A15.

<sup>56</sup>Washington Post, November 30, 1989, A37.

<sup>57</sup>Washington Post, December 4, 1989, A1.

down its weapons. A senior rebel commander stated in the wake of the Nicaraguan elections that "the FMLN is feeling the need to end the war."<sup>58</sup>

### C. THE PROCESS

Gunther and Higley define elites as "persons who are able, by virtue of their strategic positions in powerful organizations, to affect national political outcomes regularly and substantially."<sup>59</sup> "Elites affect political outcome 'regularly' in that their individual points of view; and possible actions are seen by other influential persons as important factors to be weighed when assessing the likelihood of continuities, and changes in regimes and policies."<sup>60</sup> In El Salvador, the elites of both commissions recognized each other's political points of view to assess the likelihood of the negotiation process.

Gunther and Higley proposed two basic but parallel dimensions in the structuring and functioning of elites – the extent of structural integration and the extent of value consensus.

Structural integration involves the relative inclusiveness of informal and formal networks of communication, and influence among elite persons, groups, and factions. Value consensus involves the agreement among elites on formal and informal rules and codes of political conduct, and on the legitimacy of existing political institutions.<sup>61</sup>

These two dimensions distinguish three types of national elites: disunified, consensually unified, and ideologically unified. Disunified elite is where structural integration and value consensus is minimal. Consensually unified elite is where structural integration and value consensus is relatively inclusive. Ideologically unified elite is where structural integration value consensus is seemingly monolithic.

Before the negotiation process began in 1984, Salvadoran elites represented an ideologically unified elite population. Gunther and Higley stated that in order to have a transformation from either disunified or ideologically unified elite to consensually unified elite, it must take two principle forms: settlement and convergence.

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<sup>58</sup>Washington Post, February 27, 1990, A17.

<sup>59</sup>Gunther and Higley, 8.

<sup>60</sup>Gunther and Higley, 9.

<sup>61</sup>Gunther and Higley, 8.

"Elite settlements are relatively rare events in which warring elite factions suddenly and deliberately reorganized their relations by negotiating compromises on their most basic disagreements."<sup>62</sup> "Elite convergence is a fundamental change that takes place within unconsolidated democracies. It is initiated when some opposing actions in the disunified elites that characterize such democracies discover that, by forming a broad electoral coalition they can mobilize a reliable majority of voters, win elections repeatedly, and thereby protect their interests by dominating government executive power."<sup>63</sup>

The agreements between the government and the FMLN on formal rules of political conduct and on the legitimacy of existing political institutions settled the basic disagreements of both parties (Geneva on 4 April 1990, San Jose III on 26 July 1990, Mexico on 27 April, and New York on 25 September 1991). The signing of the peace accords on 16 January 1992 proclaimed a more democratic El Salvador and represented an elite settlement.

Gunther and Higley proposed two sets of circumstances that appear to foster elite settlement. The first is a prior occurrence of a conflict where all factions suffered heavy losses. When these conflicts emerge, deeply divided elites tend to be more disposed to seek compromises than in other circumstances.<sup>64</sup> In El Salvador, the civil war was a conflict in which no faction clearly triumphed. Social leveling tendencies that emerged after the Leftist offensive of 1989 made the FMLN elite recognize that renewed fighting might cost them their elite position. The second circumstance is a major crisis that threatens the resumption of widespread violence. Such crises may occur when the acting head of state's policy failures and power abuses bring elite discontent to the highest level.<sup>65</sup> In El Salvador, this did not happen. With the election of President Cristiani, the government wanted to push for a negotiated solution. It was the FMLN military actions that threatened not only the resumption of widespread violence, but also the negotiation process.<sup>66</sup>

Gunther and Higley outlined four important settlement features:

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<sup>62</sup>Gunther and Higley, 13.

<sup>63</sup>Gunther and Higley, 24.

<sup>64</sup>Gunther and Higley, 25.

<sup>65</sup>Gunther and Higley, 25.

<sup>66</sup>Washington Post, November 20, 1989, A1.



1. Speed. "It appears that elite settlement are accomplished quickly or not at all. Facing a serious political crisis that threatens renewed elite warfare, a settlement involves intensive efforts to find a way out."<sup>67</sup> After the Leftist offensive of 1989, the FMLN was pushed by civil society, by the former Soviet Union, and by other communist allies to formulate a different strategy to resolve the armed conflict. The FMLN's military and political position in the country was jeopardized by this military action, and forced the FMLN's General Command to consider concessions that they would not have endorsed in other circumstances.
2. Face-to-Face, largely secret, negotiations among leaders of the major elite factions. "Through a combination of skills, desperation, and accidents, impasses were broken and crucial compromises were struck. The number of negotiating sessions involved in elite settlement was probably in the hundreds, as they required not only compromises between major factions but also agreements between them."<sup>68</sup> From 1989 to 1992, twenty different face-to-face negotiating sessions took place in the Salvadoran process. Despite the two Left offensives and other major negotiation crises. Both parties on December 1991 made crucial compromises.
3. The drafting of written agreement. "Written agreements committed elite factions publicly to the concessions and guarantees made privately."<sup>69</sup> The most important of all the written agreements signed by the government and the FMLN is the peace accord signed in Mexico on 16 January 1992. They represented the concessions, and guarantees of both parties.
4. Predominance of experienced political leaders. "Their superior knowledge of issues and of how politics are played enables them to see what has to be done and how to do it. Moreover, long political experience often entails political learning: Recollection of costly previous conflicts appears to have induced leaders to avoid the risks inherent in a resumption of unrestrained conflict."<sup>70</sup> The FMLN negotiation commission had more political experience than their counterparts. FMLN elites recollected previous negotiation conflicts that occurred in past meetings, and used them to formulate their general strategy before they came to the negotiating table.

Besides these procedural features, Gunther and Higley suggested that elite settlement structures have similarities. They stated that in countries such as Colombia and

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<sup>67</sup>Gunther and Higley, 15.

<sup>68</sup>Gunther and Higley, 16.

<sup>69</sup>Gunther and Higley, 17.

<sup>70</sup>Gunther and Higley, 18.

Venezuela where elite settlements occurred in the 1950s, each country had a low level of socioeconomic development. When this level of development prevailed, national elites enjoyed autonomy from mass constituency and pressures. "Elite factions and leaders could compromise on questions of principles without strong pressures to stand firm."<sup>71</sup> "The importance of elite autonomy in fashioning settlements can also be seen in the secrecy of the negotiation they involved; settlements, it would appear, cannot be arranged in a democratic or mass-media fishbowl."<sup>72</sup> Throughout the negotiation processes in El Salvador, the country's socioeconomic development was low. However, this did not mean that both parties had the autonomy to compromise on questions of principle without strong pressures to stand firm.

Political autonomy does not necessarily come from internal mass following and pressures, but is also imposed by external actors. Throughout the negotiation process both sides received pressure from internal and external actors that compromised the autonomy of each negotiation commission. For example, the Legislative Assembly stood together in April 1991 to ward off FMLN's efforts to change constitutional amendment procedures. After the offensive of 1989 and 1990, the FMLN was pressured by the former Soviet Union and other communist allies to find a negotiated solution to the armed conflict. The FMLN negotiation commission also had to comply with the demands of its middle level commanders and its combatants in order to maintain control of their military apparatus.

On the other hand, the government received pressure from the armed forces when it came to negotiate the purging and the restructuring of the military. The United States pressured the government by tying economic and military aid not only to human rights issues, but also to progress in the peace talks.

Civil society pressured both parties to find a peaceful solution to the armed conflict, especially after the Leftist offensive of 1989. Both parties influenced each other with military or sabotage actions. Evidently, internal and external actors also limited the autonomy of each commission when it came to standing firm in their compromises and consensus. As a result, Gunther and Higley's statement on this point does not hold strong in El Salvador.

The elite settlement of 31 December 1991 did occur in a fishbowl of democracy and mass-media because the government and the FMLN agreed in Geneva that political parties

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<sup>71</sup>Gunther and Higley, 19.

<sup>72</sup>Gunther and Higley, 19.

and social organizations had to play a role in the consolidation of the peace talks. Gunther and Higley stated that the presence of "triggering circumstances, subsequent processes, elite autonomy, and limited mass mobilization" are crucial for an elite settlement to take place. Once again, this does not follow the Salvadoran case. The Salvadoran elite settlement did not only begin under a limited elite autonomy or with a massive participation of social organizations, it took place while the fighting continued in the countryside.

The consolidation of the Peace Accords on the 16th of January 1992 by the Salvadoran government and the FMLN's General Command was successful because relevant political events that took place around the world influenced the negotiating behavior and attitudes of both parties. Pressures put upon the FMLN by its communist allies, and pressures put upon the government by the United States and the United Nations motivated both parties to become more collaborative with each other. Moreover, after the Leftist offensive of 1989, evidently the Salvadoran armed conflict no longer had a win-lose proposition among the parties. The civil war had come to a stalemate. The self-analysis of the FMLN in 1989 showed that their military power and political influence over the population was declining, forcing the FMLN to move toward the negotiation solution.

Civil society played a main role when it came to pressure both parties to come to negotiate and to overcome barriers in the peace talks. The FMLN was more influenced by these pressures than the government, especially after the Offensive of 1989. However, civil society strengthened President Cristiani's hand in promoting a more serious, and dynamic negotiation process between both parties. That process was assisted by the presence of a third party. A third party can be most effective when it is apolitical, legitimate, visionary, charismatic, conciliatory, knowledgeable of the internal factors causing the internal dispute, and from outside the country's boundaries. The involvement of a third party makes the negotiation process more dynamic, leaving little room for the situation to become stagnant.

#### **D. CONCLUSION**

On January 16, 1992, El Salvador was left with many painful scars, but the country was anxious to start its new democratic life. Some individuals might wonder why the Salvadorans could not have come to terms sooner and thereby saved 12 years of violence, spared 75,000 lives, and avoided the disaster of civil war? It took the British over 600 years to go from the Magna Carta to an expanded franchise. Along the way, they could not

manage to avoid the Wat Tyler's Rebellion, the Wars of the Roses, the English Civil War, Cromwell's Protectorate, and the massive violence exercised by the upper classes against the lower.<sup>73</sup> By contrast, it took the Salvadoran "only" 60 years to go from the commercial revolution of 1870 to the collapse of the oligarchy in 1932 and another 60 years to realize that a democratic regime offered every Salvadoran a more reasonable political system with mutual guarantees.

The purpose of the analysis was to show a detailed examination of why, how, and when the behavior of each of the national and international variables changed in each negotiation period. The following table shows how each variable behaved during both periods and how it affected the outcome of the peace process. A numerical rating has been chosen from zero to ten to show how influential each variable was. The least influential would be rated as zero and the most influential as ten.

**Table 1. Influential National and International Variables.**  
**in the Salvadoran Negotiation Process.**

Negotiation Period	Government	FMLN	A.F.	P.S.	C.S.	Church	I.V.	Outcome
Duarte (1981-1988)	4	2	4	2	8	6	3	Unsucc. Event
Cristiani (1989-1992)	9	7	7	7	10	4	8	Succ. Event

A.F.: Armed Forces

P.S.: Political Society

C.S.: Civil Society

I.V.: International Variables

Source: author, based on analysis in thesis.

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<sup>73</sup>Baloyra, 71.

### The Outcome

With the limited support received by all the influential variables in the first period, the outcome of the process was a total disaster, an unsuccessful event. With the positive change in the behavior of each variable, the second process managed to be a successful event ending in the signing of the Peace Accords in Mexico on 16 January 1992.

The Salvadoran armed conflict brought in many outside actors -- the United States, the former Soviet Union, regional influences (especially Venezuela and Mexico), rebel supporters (Cuba and Nicaragua), and some Western European powers. These external actors often overwhelmed the locals with their own concerns, interests, and agendas. Some of these actors, if not all, tried to micromanage the Salvadoran crisis through diplomatic, economic, and military means but, in the end, it was the Salvadoran people who determined their own fate over the negotiating table.

Peace finally came to El Salvador, but the civil war left more poverty, more delinquency, more social and economic problems, more corruption, and a loss of patriotic, moral and religious values. Despite these difficulties and the high cost in human and monetary terms, El Salvador moved to a new democratic phase via the honest and vigilant implementation of the Peace Accords.

#### IV. THE IMPLEMENTATION PROCESS OF THE PEACE ACCORDS

##### A. INTRODUCTION

The purposes of this chapter are: 1) to examine the phases of the implementation process of the peace accords; 2) to analyze how national and international actors played an important role in the implementation of the accords; and 3) to assess the nature of the problems affecting the implementation process, so that other nations looking at El Salvador can learn from them.

On February 16, 1992, the Salvadoran government and the FMLN reaffirmed the purpose of the Geneva agreements "to end the armed conflict through means of political negotiations at the shortest time possible; promote the democratization of the country; guarantee unrestricted human rights and; reunite the Salvadoran society."<sup>74</sup> With the completion of the peace talks and the acknowledgment of the agreements in Caracas and New York, both parties reached a political settlement known as the *Acuerdos de Paz de El Salvador* (Peace Accords of El Salvador). The signing of these accords, under the verification of the United Nations, led the country into a new phase in its political history. The accords meant two things: the enlargement of socio-political expectations of the Salvadorans within a new democratic framework and with respect to their human rights, and a definite end to the civil war. Although the peace accords represent a blueprint for a more democratic El Salvador, they could fall victim to political maneuvering that might disrupt their implementation.

The peace accords of 1992 tailored a dynamic cycle of political events. This dynamic cycle meant that if one political event was not executed on time, the next event would fall behind schedule, causing a slowdown of the entire implementation process. An execution calendar was formulated by both parties to make the process more expeditious and both agreed to follow it with ONUSAL verification.

The accords were divided in nine chapters and six appendices.<sup>75</sup> They included: 1) The Armed Forces; 2) The National Civil Police Force (CNP); 3) The Judicial System; 4) The Electoral System; 5) Social and Economic Topics; 6) Political Participation of the FMLN; 7) Cessation of the Armed Conflict; 8) United Nations Verification; and 9) Execution Calendar.

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<sup>74</sup>Geneva Agreements, 04 April 1990.

<sup>75</sup>Acuerdos de Paz Document, Chapultepec: Mexico, 16 January 1992.

## B. THE IMPLEMENTATION PHASES OF THE PEACE ACCORDS

### 1. Phase One. (02 February 1992 - 31 October 1992)

On the first of February 1992, the first stage of this phase began with the cessation of the armed conflict. ONUSAL's military delegation had the mission of verifying the separation of both parties military forces and supervising the activities of the existing police force. The armed forces and the FMLN could not: attack by air, sea or ground; perform military actions or patrols; occupy new military positions; perform any kind of reconnaissance missions or acts of sabotage. They could not perform any military activity that was judged by ONUSAL as being dangerous to the peace accords and/or to the civilian population.

The next stage was to concentrate the conflicting military forces in separate places. The objective of this separation was to avoid armed confrontations between both sides, and to facilitate ONUSAL's missions. This concentration process took longer than was stipulated due to the negligence of the FMLN to comply with the cease-fire agreements.<sup>76</sup>

On April 1992, serious delays arose in the implementation of key accord provisions, threatening the cease-fire.<sup>77</sup> As delays and disputes developed over sensitive aspects of the accords, ONUSAL's civilian delegation came to play an important role. ONUSAL's verification responsibilities expanded to mediate the interpretation and implementation of the accords. To prevent a total breakdown, both sides turned to ONUSAL to act as a mediator. With the help of ONUSAL, both parties finally agreed to avoid activities that could threaten the accords. On May 1992, a public report released by ONUSAL stated that while both parts were responsible for delays and violations of the accords, the government bore responsibility for the most serious problems. This announcement embarrassed the government and obligated it to take its commitment more seriously. In June 1992, the government created a new set of agreements that increased both sides' commitment to the implementation process.

The final stage of this phase came on 31 October 1992. On this day, the FMLN, under the supervision of ONUSAL, destroyed, at least in theory, all of its weapons. This event started the demobilization process of the FMLN's armed structure. Throughout the process, the FMLN behaved in a way that endangered the consolidation of the peace

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<sup>76</sup>Acuerdos de Paz: Chapter VII.

<sup>77</sup>FMLN's ex-combatants occupied land around the country that the government forces had forcibly evicted them for invading. Also, neither side concentrated their forces on time. Report of the Secretary-General on the ONUSAL, U.N. Doc. S/23999 (New York: United Nations, 26 May 1992) pp. 2-3, 8-9.

accords. The FMLN submitted a weapon inventory of some 4,000 arms. It was obvious that the FMLN had more weapons than it claimed. Most of the combatants concentrated in the places were old individuals, women, and children. These individuals represented only 40% of the total combatants. Also, the discovery of a FMLN's weapon arsenal in Managua, Nicaragua, made it clear that the Left desired to retain some arms as an insurance policy.

After a series of delays caused by FMLN's middle commanders and field combatants, the demobilization was completed in December 1992. ONUSAL's large-scope presence, according to one official, "made it difficult for both sides to intensify the fighting or to walk away from the negotiating table. It was hard to fight in the presence of ONUSAL."<sup>78</sup> Also, the power of ONUSAL to deploy its personnel anywhere in the country and to enter any military installation without prior notice made ONUSAL's mission dissuasive and/or preventive.<sup>79</sup>

With the full demobilization of the FMLN's forces, the dynamic of the implementation process changed dramatically. Many political analysts thought that the disappearance of the FMLN's military structure significantly weakened its position to insist upon government compliance. But this never happened because the FMLN, under ONUSAL supervision, managed to maintain its urban terrorist units armed and organized. The FMLN General Command would use these units any time they felt threatened by any aspect of the implementation process. The FMLN had not abandoned its strategy to use force any time its political, military, and economic interests were threatened.<sup>80</sup> The demobilization of the armed force's anti-guerrilla units took place with delays but it was accomplished with ONUSAL's insistence to cling to the execution calendar. With the armed forces reduction to 50 percent and the FMLN's forces demobilized, Phase One ended, and the implementation process continued as scheduled.

## **2. Phase Two (31 December 1992 - Present)**

After the cease-fire of 31 December 1992, the nation was ready to start its next implementation phase. The consolidation of the accords and the democratization of El

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<sup>78</sup> Interview with ONUSAL official in San Salvador (Prensa Grafica Newspaper, San Salvador: El Salvador, 29 May 1992).

<sup>79</sup> Writer's personal knowledge.

<sup>80</sup> Armed Forces Intelligence Report, San Salvador: El Salvador, 23 February 1993.



Salvador began on this historical date. In this phase, ONUSAL and COPAZ<sup>81</sup> became responsible for overseeing and organizing different subcommissions to develop each pending topic of the accords. COPAZ and its subcommissions<sup>82</sup> were tasked with promoting elite cooperation in order to facilitate the compliance of the pending accords. This compliance was to be developed in the following five ways:

*a. The Armed Forces*

The FMLN demanded the removal of any military officer known as a human rights violator. This removal process was named *depuracion* (purging). As was agreed in the accords, the *Comision Ad-hoc* (Ad-hoc Commission) was to review the records of every officer and determine whether the officer should remain in the armed forces or be purged. The president was obliged to carry out the commission recommendations within sixty days. Another body appointed to oversee this purging was the *Comision de la Verdad* (the Truth Commission). This commission was responsible for the investigation of the most serious human rights violations perpetrated by both parties. Its findings would also be reported to the president.

A number of institutional changes in the armed forces were promised under this accord. The armed forces had to make a significant reduction in its units, personnel, equipment, and expenses. The armed forces were also required to guide its doctrine based on subordination of military power to civilian authorities and respect for human rights. The most important changes were: the relocation of the intelligence unit to presidential control; the creation of a new doctrine based on constitutional reforms of 1991, limiting the military role to defend the country from external threats; the drafting of new principles and operating procedures for the military academy; a reduction of the armed forces from 90,000 to 31,000; the dissolution of special force units (Special Anti-Guerrilla battalions); and the constitution of a police force separate from the military and under civilian control.<sup>83</sup>

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<sup>81</sup>COPAZ was to be made up of two representatives each from the government and the FMLN, plus representatives from each of the political parties in the Legislative Assembly. Acuerdos de Instalacion de la Fase Transitoria de la Comision Nacional para la Consolidacion de la Paz (COPAZ), Mexico D.F.: Mexico, 11 October 1991.

<sup>82</sup>Subcommissions were formed to oversee (a) the redistribution of land to ex-combatants and residents of former conflict zones; (b) the creation of the CNP; (c) the preparation of electoral reforms; (d) the observance of human rights conditions; (e) the guarantee of freedom of expression; and (f) the implementation of rehabilitative programs for ex-combatants and civilians wounded in the War.

<sup>83</sup>Acuerdos de Paz: Chapter I.

**b.     *The Civilian National Police Force (CNP)***

The new civilian police force was the institution empowered to maintain the internal security and peace in El Salvador. Once formed, the CNP would operate out of the Ministry of the Interior, instead of the Defense Ministry, as had been done for forty-one years. The head of the police had to be a civilian appointed by the president. The legislative branch would have the power to dismiss the police director and the chief of state intelligence if serious human rights violations occurred in these institutions. The CNP had to be in place within twenty-one months from the signing of the accord, with an initial force of 5,700 men, and a final force of 10,000. All recruits would go through a new admission board formed and overseen by civilian authorities. Due to controversial disputes regarding the number of participants from each side, the final formula was that most of the recruits must be Salvadorans who had not participated in either side of the war, with an equal number of former FMLN and police combatants.<sup>84</sup>

**c.     *Electoral and Judicial Reforms***

The government and the FMLN previously agreed upon the electoral and judicial reforms of April 1991, which were ratified by the Salvadoran legislature. The Peace Accords added a new judicial provision that outlined the creation of a more professional and nonpolitical Judicial Training School for judges and prosecutors. The main changes to the judicial system were the election of Supreme Court justices by a two-thirds majority of the Legislative Assembly, commitment of 6 percent of the national budget to strengthen the ill-equipped judicial system, and the election of a government human rights prosecutor by two-third majority of the Legislative Assembly. The most important electoral reform was the creation of the Central Electoral Council.<sup>85</sup>

**d.     *Economic Reforms***

The chapter on economic reforms called for the implementation of land reforms already mandated in the constitution, but never had been carried out. State lands would be distributed to agricultural workers who were former FMLN combatants. The government promised not to evict tenants of lands in conflict zones until a mechanism for resolving ownership issues was formulated. One provision permitted the state to buy land from absentee owners and redistribute it. If the owner did not wish to sell, the current

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<sup>84</sup>Acuerdos de Paz: Chapter II.

<sup>85</sup>Acuerdos de Paz: Chapter III-IV.

tenants would be given land elsewhere. The government was also committed to present a *Plan Nacional para la Reconstrucción* (National Reconstruction Plan). The plan made special provisions for those sectors affected by the war at a cost of \$1.8 billion.<sup>86</sup>

**e. *Political Participation of the FMLN***

The most important points of the chapter on political participation of the FMLN were the adoption of legislative reforms that would guarantee the FMLN ex-combatants their political and civic rights and their incorporation into the political structure; the written authority allowing the FMLN to have its own radio broadcasting station; and the legalization of the FMLN as a political party. These reforms would not take place until the FMLN was fully demobilized.<sup>87</sup>

With these guidelines, COPAZ and its subcommission, together with the Legislative Assembly, started to develop plans and mechanisms to comply with each pending accord. If any of these organizations developed a viable plan, the government had the responsibility of executing it. If delays occurred, ONUSAL provided a climate of security and confidence for both parties. ONUSAL served as the communication channel, provided an authoritative interpretation of the accords, proposed solutions when crises developed, requested concessions and commitment from both parties, and stepped in to verify aspects of the accords. These ONUSAL supportive actions helped COPAZ and its subcommissions to avoid, and sometimes eliminate, stalemates encountered in the conference rooms. Despite ONUSAL efforts to maintain a climate of security and confidence, some of the pending accords created internal disputes between COPAZ subcommission members. These disputes slowed down the implementation process and caused some aspects of the accords not to be accomplished such as: the land distribution program; the development of the National Security Academy (later on slowing down the displacement of the CNP's forces around the country); the incorporation of the FMLN in the socio-political structures of the country; and the total disarmament and disappearance of the FMLN military apparatus.

Despite these problems, the government, the FMLN, the people, and ONUSAL knew that the full implementation of the pending accords was necessary to promote peace and the consolidation of democracy.

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<sup>86</sup>Acuerdos de Paz: Chapter V.

<sup>87</sup>Acuerdos de Paz: Chapter VI.

### C. THE ELECTIONS OF 1994

In 1993, the FMLN became a legal political party. This event opened a new page in Salvadoran history because Marxist-Leninist politicians joined the country's political race. The political competition in the runoff to the 1994 presidential election was about to demonstrate how Salvadoran political actors were willing to compete by peaceful, democratic means.<sup>88</sup>

In May 1993, a tumabout in the political race took place when the Truth Commission reported its findings to President Cristiani. Important political elites were mentioned, forcing the FMLN and other political parties to offer new candidates. The individuals cited in the report could not run for any political office.

With the help of ONUSAL and COPAZ, the government rushed to carry out the pending accords before the elections of 1994, but this proved impossible. The implementation of the pending accords had fallen behind schedule. Even with the full compliance of the accords, El Salvador was destined to go through a period of intense political competition. In this political race, the FMLN faced its biggest challenge in transforming itself into a trusted, viable, and peaceful political party. The basic question was whether the Left would unite for the 1994 elections or fragment.<sup>89</sup>

ARENA underwent similar turmoil after the death of the founding leader of the government party, D'Aubuisson, Roberto. A split inside the party's structure was obvious. There were those who wanted the party to return to its initial principles (hard-line anticommunist nationalism) and those who wanted to continue with Cristiani's line (more moderate and populist). These political uncertainties made this election more absorbing than others. Before the campaigns started, all parties agreed to sign a settlement, in the presence of a ONUSAL representative, stating that the upcoming elections would be free, fair, and secure.<sup>90</sup>

In 1994, El Salvador witnessed the *Elecciones del Siglo* (Elections of the Century), so named because they were to take place in a political context created after the signing of the Peace Accords that left the political spectrum open to any legal political party. The

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<sup>88</sup>Linda Robinson, "Why Central America is Still Not Democratic," *SAIS Review*, Summer-Fall 1993/Vol. 12, No.2.

<sup>89</sup>Ruben Zamora, former member of the FDR, joined the Democratic Convergence and tried to capture the center-left portion of the Christian Democrat Party, but he did not succeed.

<sup>90</sup>Compromiso Politico, San Salvador: El Salvador, 11 January 1994.

Elections of the Century were about to bring an overall change to the Salvadoran political structure, because the people were about to elect new officials for every executive and legislative office.

The political representation in the election included parties from the far-right to the far-left.<sup>91</sup> The Left formed a coalition that included the *Movimiento Nacional Revolucionario* (MNR - National Revolutionary Movement), the *Convergencia Democratica* (CD - Democratic Convergence), and the FMLN. The elections began on 20 March 1994. Despite the difficulties that people encountered when they went to register to vote, millions of Salvadorans went to the polls. The final vote showed that the top three parties were ARENA with 49.30% of the vote, the Leftist Coalition with 24.95%, and the Christian Democratic Party (PDC) with 16.39%. No party was declared the winner because the constitution mandated that the minimum percentage for victory must be 50% plus one vote. The Electoral Council announced a runoff between the two top parties on 24 April. In the runoff, ARENA received 818,264 votes (68.35%) and the Leftist Coalition, 378,980 votes (31.65%).<sup>92</sup> ARENA was legally declared the winner and Armando Calderon Sol became the newly elected president.

As a result of the legislative elections, ARENA had 39 members of Congress, the FMLN had 21, the PDC had 18, the *Partido de Conciliación Nacional* (PCN - National Conciliation Party) had 4, the CD had 1, and the *Movimiento Unificado* (MU - Unified Movement) had 1. Once again, ARENA had control of the Legislative Assembly, but this time with a stronger opposition, represented primarily by the FMLN and the CD. The presence of the FMLN in the Legislative Assembly will make the Assembly's work more dynamic and more challenging. In the municipal elections, ARENA won more than the 80 percent of the mayoral seats. The other 20 percent were divided among the FMLN, the PDC, the PCN.

The Coalition declared an electoral fraud, but former ONUSAL Mission Chief Augusto Ramirez Ocampos publicly manifested his satisfaction with the electoral process. He stated that there was no space for an electoral fraud.<sup>93</sup> His position was ratified by international

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<sup>91</sup>Estudio Socio-Político de la Universidad Católica Centroamericana, San Salvador: El Salvador, 22 February 1994.

<sup>92</sup>La Prensa Grafica Newspaper, San Salvador: El Salvador, 28 April 1994, p. 6-8.

<sup>93</sup>La Prensa Grafica, 23 March 1994.

observers spread throughout the country who were also pleased with the results and the conduct of the electoral process. After these public declarations, the Leftist Coalition, without further objection, accepted the results of the vote.

The newly elected government took office on 1 May 1994 with a new agenda known as *Plan Nacional de Gobierno para el Desarrollo Pleno de El Salvador* (National Plan for the Development of El Salvador).<sup>94</sup> Its purposes were to consolidate a reconstruction process of a new modern, humanized, and democratic Salvadoran society; to prepare the country for future political, social and economic challenges; and to comply with the pending peace accords. Within this plan, the government formulated a national objective to join all sectors of society in the construction of a peaceful and permanent consolidation of El Salvador's democracy. To reach this objective, the government unveiled a plan for: (a) the consolidation of a representative democracy; (b) the reenforcement of human rights and public security; (c) the stimulation of economic growth; and (d) the promotion of civic, spiritual, and patriotic values.

Opposition forces under the leadership of the FMLN presented two sociopolitical plans in the Legislative Assembly. The first would consolidate the pending accords and encourage the participation of all Salvadorans in the country's political structure. The second would guarantee the security of the people; transform the agriculture-industrial sectors; promote the socio-economic development of the people; reward individual initiative; and support democracy.

The FMLN has used various ways to pressure the new government to comply with the pending accords. The FMLN has used the Legislative Assembly to approve or disapprove bills passed by the president and is more likely to approve those bills that fulfill their interests. Either way, opposition parties will continue to use the *Movimineto Social Organizado* (MSO - Organized Social Movements)<sup>95</sup> to push their positions. The rest of the minority parties in the Assembly will play an important role any time a majority party looks for a coalition partner.

After one year, El Salvador, under the government of President Calderon Sol, has gone through a variety of changes. On the political side, the Coalition in the Legislative

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<sup>94</sup>This plan was based on the Plan for National Reconstruction (San Salvador: El Salvador, 21 July 1991) created by former President Alfredo Cristiani.

<sup>95</sup>An organization formed by labor unions and other mass organizations. Its purpose reflects the same objectives that prevailed during the 1970s with the mass movements in San Salvador.

Assembly, through the MSO, developed a well-orchestrated strategy to promote popular dissatisfaction against the government. The MSO demonstrations in San Salvador pressed for compliance with the pending accords. The most mentioned are the land distribution plans and the existence of former armed forces personnel in the CNP. On the other hand, the ideological differences of the FMLN General Command finally exploded. It became divided when some of its political representatives in Congress were elected to the Legislative Assembly Staff. Some members of the General Command did not approve these political appointments and, two months later, the FMLN was divided in two factions -- social-democrats and orthodox Marxist-Leninists.

Finally, political settlements in the Legislative Assembly will be reached only to remedy problems in the short-run. Political organization and individual interests dominate the political framework of the Salvadoran elite, a behavior that harms not only the consolidation of democracy, but also the full implementation of the peace accords.

On the social side, the country is facing new problems, most of them effects of the post-Cold War period. The presence of "street gangs" and the unrestricted growth of delinquency threaten citizens' lives and the consolidation of democracy. The CNP is incapable of solving this problem, not because its members are not trained or do not have the resources, but because the delinquents outnumber them and possess more sophisticated weapons. The massive import of weapons during the civil war enabled these individuals to procure weapons. Also, a vast majority of ex-combatants preferred to obtain money through the use of force, instead of going to work. The civil war has also promoted a loss of moral, civic, and social values. El Salvador, at the present moment, does not possess the moral, civic, and social values to consolidate its democratic system.

On the military side, the armed forces of El Salvador continue to support the mandates written in the constitutional reforms of 1992. The military has moved toward a new educational and professional doctrine based on three aspects. The first aspect is preservation of the military. The missions of the armed forces are now based on the Constitution of El Salvador and new institutional laws. The military has increased its efforts to promote better relations with different sectors of society and other national organizations. This has promoted a climate of truth and harmony. The Salvadoran armed forces, jointly with the U.S. armed forces, have developed a long-term plan, *Fuertes Caminos* (Strong Paths), to enhance this civil-military relation around the country.

The second aspect is the reinforcement of the military. Through a new professional framework, the military is developing new educational programs that will enhance the formation and the specialization of its members. The armed forces have been restructured to fit the new country's democratic system and have formulated new military laws to comply with new judicial reforms.

The third aspect is the consolidation of the military. The premise of this consolidation is that the Salvadoran armed forces need to accept the weaknesses of the past to play a better role in the new democratic system. The military will converge with the rest of the Salvadoran society to demonstrate that they are willing to obey the mandates given by the chief of the armed forces and the Salvadoran Constitution.

On the economic side, the government has implemented new economic plans aimed at promoting more economic growth. Economic growth does not come quickly after 12 years of civil war, and the government is working very hard to promote international investments. The country needs to have a higher level of socio-economic development, a stronger economic infrastructure, and full implementation of the pending accords to promote a peaceful democratic consolidation.

#### **D. ANALYSIS**

When the peace accords ending El Salvador's 12 years of civil war were signed in Mexico in 1992, the United Nations Secretary-General Boutros Boutros Ghali declared that the agreements were "a revolution achieved by negotiations."<sup>96</sup> The government and the FMLN declared their satisfaction with the peace accords for different reasons. The FMLN emphasized the revolutionary nature of the reforms, while the government stressed the achievement of peace and the preservation of constitutional order. Few Salvadorans have spoken out against the accords. However, in the months after the cease-fire, the euphoria was replaced by caution and distrust as the full demobilization of the FMLN, the total incorporation of FMLN's combatants to social life, and economic reforms fell way behind schedule.

The peace accords provided a blueprint for a more democratic El Salvador, but they were not self-executing. The new rules of the game continued to be defined through political

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<sup>96</sup>Javier Perez de Cuellar left the United Nations on the first of January 1992, and was replaced by Boutros Boutros Ghali. Speech by U.N. Secretary-General, "La Larga Noche ha Llegado a su Fin," (Chapultepec: Mexico, 16 January 1992).



maneuvering and arduous negotiations over implementation. These and other challenges to the implementation process raised the question of whether the accords truly represented a new socio-political pact among Salvadorans, a temporary elite settlement, or a superficial consensus imposed by external factors.<sup>97</sup>

Different national and international actors have played very important roles in the implementation of pending accords and the transition to democracy in El Salvador. ONUSAL became a very important international agency whose initial role was to verify the agreements on human rights. But, as delays and disputes over politically sensitive aspects of the accords develop, ONUSAL's responsibilities will expand to mediate the interpretation and implementation of the accords. The most important role played by ONUSAL was to facilitate the consolidation of the peace accords by strengthening domestic structures that will prevent the recurrence of conflict. COPAZ also contributed to this effort by consolidating some aspects of the peace accords. COPAZ and its subcommissions tried their best to comply with their mandate.

Despite the efforts of ONUSAL and COPAZ, there is evidence that the accords remain full of pitfalls. Important elements contributing to these problems include the lack of adequate representation and knowledge of the government commission in the negotiating table; the dearth of political commitment and consensus to implement reforms; the paucity of competent verification mechanisms of ONUSAL and domestic bodies; the inability of international agencies to deliver on time technical, economic, and human assistance; and the reliance on international actors to resolve internal problems. It is crucial that other nations, looking to El Salvador as an example for future conflict resolution, understand the nature of these implementation problems so they can obtain better results in becoming a more democratic society and have a more sustainable peace than El Salvador.

Those who represented the government in the negotiation process cannot be fully blamed for the gaps in the peace accords. These gaps would not have emerged if the members of the negotiating commission would have had more adequate knowledge of how to handle different political, economic, social, and military issues. The representation of different social sectors or government branches in the negotiating commission could have precluded these gaps. These gaps delayed the implementation process and the country's

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<sup>97</sup>Baloyra, 77.

democratic consolidation. These problems could have been solved, not in the implementation process, but at the negotiating table.

Another problem stemmed from the lack of political consensus (and insufficient commitment to consensus-building). This issue relates to the problems of enforcing political commitment and encouraging consensus building among Salvadoran political society and institutions. One important area in which the government lacked the political determination to uphold its obligations under the accords was the purging of the military. When the Ad-hoc Commission called for the removal of virtually all the military high command, political activists triggered a strong challenge to the accords. The disunity of opposition elites to promote a political settlement also promoted an inadequate environment for full compliance with the accords. Less notorious, but more damaging to the peace accords, were the delays in the creation of the CNP. Despite the vital importance of the CNP and the *Academia Nacional de Seguridad Publica* (ANSP - National Academy for Public Security), the creation of these two institutions was frustrated by the lack of economic funds promised by many allied countries; the lack of consensus among COPAZ subcommission members responsible for the development of the CNP (opposition parties led by the FMLN lack the political will to promote a consensus);<sup>98</sup> and the government's inability to promote a fast deployment of the CNP. The CNP was scheduled to begin its deployment after the demobilization of the FMLN, to assure their security and impartial investigation of crimes. The ANSP opened four months late because of the inability of the subcommission to formulate, on time, an implementation strategy and the lack of funds or facilities available to the government. Another important reform blocked by a lack of political commitment was the establishment of the Human Rights Ombudsman's office, which later had to take the role carried out by the Human Rights Division of ONUSAL. A lack of government funding and the willingness of the political elites to converge in the roles of the Ombudsman's office impeded the start of its operation.

Some of the crises confronting the implementation of the peace accords have revolved around the land tenure issue, but the most damaging long-term deficiency of the accords relates to the inadequate reforms of the judicial system. This problem did start in the negotiation process. Neither the United Nations nor the members of both commissions provided this area with the same leadership as they did on issues related to the police and the military. It was not until several months into the implementation process that ONUSAL

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<sup>98</sup>Interview with General Adolfo O. Blandon, former member of the CNP subcommission, 01 January 1995.

and the government realized that the Salvadoran judicial system required a major overhaul. The constitutional reforms of 1991 did little to remedy these basic problems and, while the reforms did call for a more professional and independent selection process for justices, judges and prosecutors, the specific selection procedures were left unspecified. The reforms left also untouched the extremely hierarchical structure of the courts that enables the Supreme Court to control legal decisions and the administration of lower courts.

ONUSAL increased its efforts to guide reforms within the justice system. However, its success depended totally on the cooperation of the existing judiciary. ONUSAL's oversight of judicial and police authorities was disabled because it lacked authority in this area. This issue was not included in the peace accords. The Supreme Court president repeatedly expressed his opinion that the peace accords did not apply to the judiciary because they were signed only by the executive branch and the FMLN. This situation could have been avoided with more explicit responsibilities to the judiciary and representation of the judiciary in the government's negotiation commission. The FMLN negotiation commission did not push this issue for two reasons: it was not among its political interests as was the case of military and police reforms; and, through this controversial problem, they will continue to push their human rights issues and promote mass dissatisfaction against the government.

Verification mechanism were also inadequate. COPAZ failed to comply with the verification and the implementation of the peace accords because its functioning was slow, its organization deficient, and its management of less utility than anticipated.<sup>99</sup> The agreement to create COPAZ (in which the FMLN could participate) served as an important guarantee to the guerrillas. It guaranteed that the implementation of the accords would receive the necessary national and governmental attention. Under this agreement, subcommissions were established to formulate mechanisms and plans to comply with the pending accords.

The most prevalent weakness of COPAZ is linked to the inclusion of political parties from a wide range of ideological perspectives. The variety of representation was intended to encourage consensus decision making, however, this arrangement created a stalemate, as three parties voted with the government and three against. This deadlock generated disputes, relatively little consensus building, and serious delays to the implementation process. COPAZ's subcommissions also confronted the same problems in their decision

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<sup>99</sup>Robinson, 92.

making process.<sup>100</sup> Furthermore, the inefficiency of COPAZ and its subcommissions increased with the lack of technical expertise to deal effectively with different issues. Also, members lacked the authority of their political party to exhort compromises. The end result of this situation was that COPAZ only provided input to the implementation process and did little to verify the final output. Despite COPAZ's limited effort to comply with its mission, in almost all cases, final decisions were either made by the government or worked out in bilateral negotiations both parties and with ONUSAL mediation.

ONUSAL also fell short in its verification mission. ONUSAL had avoided making public criticisms of the government on human rights matters and the FMLN on the existence of its urban-terrorist units and of armed combatants inside former conflicting areas. Furthermore, ONUSAL failed to distinguish between cases in which investigations pointed to state or guerrilla involvement and those cases that were examples of common crime.

Further problems were created by the inability of international agencies to deliver on-time technical, economic, and human assistance. Although ONUSAL became the leading U.N. mission in El Salvador, it depended upon the main technical assistance agency of the United Nations, the United Nations Development Program (UNDP). This agency coordinated the material and technical assistance needed for institutional building. UNDP was called to respond to demands it could not handle because UNDP generally works with governments and carries on development programs rather than emergency relief.<sup>101</sup> The formation of new institutions in El Salvador, particularly the new civil police force, required technical assistance programs to be carried out in close consultation not only with the government, but also with the FMLN. When contingencies arose, such as the logistic support needed to transport FMLN's ex-combatant from camps during the cease-fire, UNDP was not able to respond as quickly as needed. These experiences suggest that the U.N. should either empower special missions such as ONUSAL by providing the necessary materials and technical assistance or focus attention on how UNDP can respond more quickly and deal more effectively with non-state actors.

Allied countries also failed to provide the economic aid that they had promised during the negotiation process. This foreign economic aid was necessary to comply with some aspects of the pending accords, such as the development of the Academy of National

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<sup>100</sup>Interview with General Blandon, 22 January 1995.

<sup>101</sup>Robinson, 23.

Security and the land distribution programs. With its limited economic resources, the government decided to comply with some of the most important aspects of the accords, but this effort was not enough. Ex-combatants from the armed forces and the FMLN demanded their land; civil society demanded the rapid deployment of the CNP, but the government did not have the money to meet everyone's demands.

Excessive reliance on international organizations created special problems. Through the United Nations, the international community was called either to resolve issues that could not be resolved by consensus or to verify the implementation of measures on which tenuous consensus was reached. The presence of ONUSAL built the confidence of the Salvadoran civil society, whose citizens expressed a distrust of governmental authorities. As a result, the victims of violent acts were more willing to report their cases to ONUSAL than to the Salvadoran judicial or police authorities. Another stunning example of reliance on international actors is the unrivaled Truth Commission. The government and the FMLN agreed that the three members of the commission had to be foreigners named by the U.N. Secretary-General to ensure their objectivity. The findings of this commission stimulated an enormous debate about the nature and the extent of abuses perpetrated by both sides. Any recommendations for prosecutions in particular cases were undercut by the amnesty law of 1993. The Salvadoran people were getting used to seeing external actors taking control of internal disputes, especially with issues related to human rights, and whenever a stalemate existed in any negotiation process.

President Calderon Sol, after one year in office, has worked to consolidate the peace accords and to make El Salvador a more democratic nation. Nonetheless, Calderon Sol and his administration will face future political, economic, and social challenges that will need to be worked out by Salvadoran social and political sectors.

## V. THE FUTURE OF EL SALVADOR (1995 - 1999)

### A. INTRODUCTION

This chapter will use Dahl's theoretical framework to analyze how El Salvador's democratic system has evolved from 1932 to 1995, and to examine a number of problems that need to be solved to strengthen the Salvadoran process of democratic consolidation.

After the elections of 1994, Salvadorans learned that without a democratic system the country had little hope of overcoming the lethal legacies of authoritarianism, terrorism, subversion, and civil war. Although Salvadorans may be blamed for the creation of these legacies, they also deserve most of the credit for giving themselves a new life. Salvadorans understand that without the full implementation of the peace accords, the consolidation of El Salvador's democratic system can never be achieved. The consolidation of democracy in El Salvador is not only bound to the implementation of the accords, but also to other political, social, and economic conditions. J. Samuel Valenzuela characterized a democratic consolidation process as "a series of confrontations between actors in which impediments (i.e., the existence of nondemocratic tutelary powers, the presence of 'reserved domains' of policy, etc.) to the minimal workings of a formal democracy are removed, resulting in the generalized perception that the new regime will continue well into the foreseeable future."<sup>102</sup> Even with the end of the civil war, many political analysts see the consolidation of democracy in El Salvador as an extremely troublesome process.

### B. ANALYSIS

Robert A. Dahl presents eight requirements for the success of a democratic system.<sup>103</sup> These requirements can be applied to El Salvador to examine if the country has moved toward a more democratic system since 1932.

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<sup>102</sup>Valenzuela, 13.

<sup>103</sup>Dahl, 3.

Table 2. Some Requirements for a Democracy  
(El Salvador 1995)

1.	Freedom to form and join organization . . . . .	Yes
2.	Freedom of expression . . . . .	Yes
3.	Right to Vote . . . . .	Yes
4.	Eligibility for public office . . . . .	Yes
5.	Right of political leaders to compete for support . . . . .	Yes
5a.	Right of political leaders to compete for votes . . . . .	Yes
6.	Alternative sources of information . . . . .	Yes
7.	Free and fair elections . . . . .	Yes
8.	Institutions for making government policies depend on votes and other expressions of preference . . . . .	Yes

Sources: Requirements taken from Dahl, Polyarchy; Ratings by author based on analysis in text.

It is important to point out that some of these requirements existed in El Salvador before the elections of 1994. Five of these requirements were fulfilled during the legislative elections of 1982 (freedom of the people to join and form organizations, right to vote, eligibility for public office, right of political leaders to compete for support/votes, and free and fair elections). The other three were consummated with the appearance of new political parties, such as the FMLN in 1993; the creation of the FMLN radio broadcasting station in 1992; and the presence of more opposition parties in the Legislative Assembly after the elections of 1994. This showed that El Salvador moved from a pseudo-democracy (1932-1982) to an unconsolidated democracy (1982-1995).<sup>104</sup> No one can deny that the country is more democratic than it was six decades ago. However, Salvadoran society needs to focus on consolidating and improving its newly democratic regime.

Dahl argued that "the chance that a country will be governed at the national level for any considerable period by a regime in which the opportunities for public contestation are available to the great bulk of the population (that is, a Polyarchy) depends on at least seven sets of complex conditions."<sup>105</sup> Dahl's analysis used a rating system from zero to ten for each condition. He assumed that any country ranked in the upper rates was more amenable to becoming a polyarchy than those ranked in the lower rates.<sup>106</sup>

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<sup>104</sup>Gunther and Higley, 3-8.

<sup>105</sup>Dahl, 202.

<sup>106</sup>Dahl, 203.

**Table 3. Conditions Favoring Polyarchy**  
(El Salvador 1994)

<u>Conditions</u>	<u>10</u>	<u>9</u>	<u>8</u>	<u>7</u>	<u>6</u>	<u>5</u>	<u>4</u>	<u>3</u>	<u>2</u>	<u>1</u>
I. Historical sequence.....										5
II. The socioeconomic order:										
A. Access to										
1. Violence.....										7
2. Socioeconomic sanctions.....										10
B. Type of economy										
1. Agrarian.....										7
2. Commercial-Industrial....										10
III. The level of socio-economic development.....										3
IV. Equalities and inequalities										
1. Objective.....										6
2. Subjective: Relative deprivation.....										7
V. Subcultural Pluralism										
1. Amount.....										9
2. If marked or high										
VI. Domination by a foreign power.....										4
VII. Beliefs of political activist										
1. Institutions of Polyarchy are legitimate.....										7
2. Only unilateral authority is legitimate.....										7
3. Polyarchy is effective in solving major problems.....										3
4. Trust in others.....										2
5. Political relationships are strictly competitive.....										2
strictly cooperative.....										3
cooperative-competitive.....										2
6. Compromise necessary and desirable.....										2

Sources: Conditions taken from Dahl, Polyarchy; Ratings by author, based on the following explanation in text.



## C. EXPLANATION

### 1. Condition I - Historical Sequence.

Dahl stated that historical sequences are used to show if a country has the historical background to reach polyarchy. Two aspects were examined the specific path or sequence of changes of a regime and the way in which a new regime was inaugurated. Dahl presents three possible paths to Polyarchy.<sup>107</sup>

#### 1. Liberation precedes inclusiveness:

A. A closed hegemony increases opportunities for public contestation and thus transformed into a competitive oligarchy.

B. The competitive oligarchy is then transformed into a Polyarchy by increasing the inclusiveness of the regime.

#### 2. Inclusiveness precedes liberalization:

A. A closed hegemony becomes inclusive.

B. The inclusive hegemony is then transformed into a Polyarchy by increasing opportunities to public contestation.

#### 3. Shortcut: A closed hegemony is abruptly transformed into a Polyarchy by a sudden grant of universal suffrage and rights of public contestation.

Dahl assumed that Path One was more likely than the other two to produce the degree of mutual security required to promote a polyarchy. In El Salvador, it was the economic elites (oligarchy) who developed the country's political rules and conditions from 1837 to 1979.<sup>108</sup> The prevailing political system of this time was a competitive oligarchy. Second, "as additional social strata were admitted into politics they were more easily socialized into the norms and practices of competitive politics already developed among the elites . . ."<sup>109</sup> Although the political apparatus was controlled by the oligarchy, public contestation opened up in the country and the people participated in the electoral processes from 1932 to 1979. Later, with the legislative election of 1982, the competitive oligarchy increased the inclusiveness of the Salvadoran people in the regime when the political apparatus was liberated (any political party was invited to participate in the electoral race). The "Elections of the Century" in 1994 reaffirmed this argument.

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<sup>107</sup>Dahl, 34.

<sup>108</sup>Dahl, 36.

<sup>109</sup>Dahl, 36.

Dahl proposed that "the first path is no longer open to most countries with hegemonic regimes, and that the liberalization of near-hegemonies will run serious risk of failure because of the difficulties, under conditions of universal suffrage and mass politics, of working out a system of mutual security." Democratic history in El Salvador is almost non-existent, but this does not prevent the country from having the necessary political tools to formulate a system of mutual security.

Dahl also stated that "the process of inauguration most auspicious for a polyarchy is one that transforms previously legitimate hegemonic forms and structures into the forms and structures suitable for political competition and thus produces no lasting cleavages or widespread doubts about the legitimacy of the new regime."<sup>110</sup> This transformation occurred in 1984, when Jose Napoleon Duarte became the new freely elected president. His government was chosen by legitimate forms and structures suitable for political competition. Given El Salvador's turbulent history with democracy, it rates a 4 for historical sequence.

## **2. Condition II - The Socioeconomic Order.**

Dahl suggested that "the likelihood that a government will tolerate an opposition increase as the resources available to the government for suppression decline relative to the resources of an opposition."<sup>111</sup> In El Salvador, the resources available to the government for suppression were neutralized by the creation of the Civil National Police; the doctrinal change of the armed forces; and the separation of the armed forces from internal security (under the peace accords). Dahl also suggested that "the likelihood that a government will tolerate an opposition increases with a reduction in the capacity of the government to use violence or socioeconomic sanctions to suppress an opposition."<sup>112</sup> This was also neutralized after the signing of the peace accords, although opposition parties continue to perpetrate socio-political violence through the army of political masses in the streets of San Salvador.

Dahl also proposed that a polyarchy is unlikely to be maintained without a pluralistic political order and with a centrally dominated social order. These two conditions create a hegemonic regime. Dahl also proposed that a polyarchy is attained when the use of violence and socioeconomic sanctions are neutralized among the government and the opposition.<sup>113</sup>

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<sup>110</sup>Dahl, 46.

<sup>111</sup>Dahl, 48.

<sup>112</sup>Dahl, 49.

<sup>113</sup>Dahl, 50.

After the end of the armed conflict, El Salvador moved from its suppression period (1932-1979) to a more favorable democratic stage. The government neither has the resources to impose repression nor the power to impose illegal socioeconomic sanctions. Since 1992, ONUSAL has monitored and ratified these conditions.

Dahl classified two basic agrarian societies. The most prevalent is a traditional peasant society that has a great deal of inequality, hierarchy, and political hegemony. The other is a free farmer society considered egalitarian and more suitable for a polyarchy.<sup>114</sup> He suggested that "the main factor determining the direction of an agrarian society are: norms about equality, the distribution of land, and military techniques."<sup>115</sup> After the implementation of the first agrarian reform,<sup>116</sup> the country started its path toward a free farmer society, but the reform was challenged by the escalation of the civil war. The government and the FMLN included the topic of land distribution in the peace accords with the goal to remedy the extreme inequality in distribution of land, wealth, and estate among Salvadoran society.

Dahl mentioned that "private ownership is neither a necessary nor sufficient for a pluralistic social order and hence for public contestation and polyarchy."<sup>117</sup> Dahl also suggested that a polyarchy will be more likely to occur with a decentralized economy rather than with a highly centralized economy, no matter what form of ownership. Despite the control of the economy by the oligarchy (1837-1979), El Salvador's economic history shows that a decentralized economy has prevailed in the country since its independence. With the end of the armed conflict, the economic system of El Salvador will continue to be even more decentralized (President Calderon Sol new economic plan). Based on the above analysis, El Salvador rates a 6 for access to violence; a 10 for access to socioeconomic sanctions; a 7 for agrarian economy; and a 10 for commercial-industrial economy.

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<sup>114</sup>Gerhard Lenski, Power and Privilege (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1966), chaps. 8 and 9; Kaare Svalastoga, Social Differentiation (New York: David McKay, 1965), chap. 3.

<sup>115</sup>Dahl, 60.

<sup>116</sup>An agrarian reform created by Jose Napoleon Duarte in 1982 and ratified by the Legislative Assembly. This reform had the goal to distribute land among the lower and middle class. Land areas with more than 245 hectares had to be distributed.

<sup>117</sup>Dahl, 61.

### 3. Condition III - The Level of Socioeconomic Development.

Dahl assumed that "a high level of socioeconomic development not only favors the transformation of a hegemonic regime to a polyarchy but also helps maintain a polyarchy."<sup>118</sup> He looked at the Gross National Product per capita of a country as one source to show socioeconomic development. He also confirmed that "there is unquestionably a significant association between socioeconomic level and political development."<sup>119</sup> History shows that those countries with a high level of socioeconomic development have a more competitive regime. On the other hand, a country with a competitive regime seems to have a higher of socioeconomic development.

Dahl also described the connection between socioeconomic development and political development. He stated that "the chances that a country will develop and maintain a competitive political regime depend upon the extent to which the country's society and economy provide literacy, education and communication, create a pluralistic rather than a centrally dominated social order, and prevent extreme inequalities among the politically relevant strata of the country."<sup>120</sup>

The 1994 World Book Atlas on Economy determined the worldwide levels of GNP per capita – a high level is \$21,960, a middle level is \$2,440, and a lower level is \$390. On this measurement, El Salvador has moved from \$800 GNP in 1984 to \$1,770 in 1993. The calculated GNP per capita for 1993 puts El Salvador in the middle between the lower and the middle level of GNP per capita in the world. Based on this analysis, El Salvador rates a 3 for the level of socioeconomic development.

### 4. Condition IV - Equalities and Inequalities.

"A country with a hegemonic regime, and extreme inequalities in the distribution of key values reduce the chances that a stable system of public contestation will develop."<sup>121</sup> Dahl is referring to the extreme inequality in the distribution of key society values as income, wealth, status, knowledge, military prowess, and political resources. El Salvador relates to this extreme inequality when the oligarchy had control of the economy, politics, and the military from 1837 to 1979. During the juntas (1979-1982), these inequalities decreased, the

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<sup>118</sup>Dahl, 62.

<sup>119</sup>Dahl, 63.

<sup>120</sup>Dahl, 74.

<sup>121</sup>Dahl, 103.

military separated from the oligarchy, and agrarian and economic reforms were carried out. In 1992, the peace accords also considered these inequality issues (Chapter VII of the Peace Accords). Despite the efforts of the government to solve these problems over the last two years, El Salvador seems to be far from solving them.

Dahl also proposed that a polyarchy or near-polyarchy is vulnerable to the effects of extreme inequality.<sup>122</sup> However, a system of competitive politics and polyarchy can manage to survive a high measure of inequality. This happens when "demands for greater equality do raise, a regime may gain allegiance among deprived groups by responding to some part of the demands, though not necessary all of them, or by responses that do not reduce the objective inequalities but do not reduce feelings of relative deprivation." In El Salvador, the government has tried to comply with topics related to the economic and social reforms, especially the distribution of land among ex-combatants from both parties (Chapter VII), but its efforts have fallen short and behind schedule. In the end, this situation has promoted a high level of relative deprivation. Based on the analysis above, El Salvador rates a 6 for objective equalities and inequalities; and a 7 for subjective equalities and inequalities.

#### **5. Condition V - Subcultural Pluralism.**

"Any dispute in which a large section of the population of a country feels that its way of life or its highest values are severely menaced by other segment of the population creates a crisis in a competitive system . . . historical record argues that the system is very likely to dissolve into a civil war or to be displaced by a hegemonic regime."<sup>123</sup> Dahl noted that subcultures may be formed around economic and social classes, occupations and educational levels, or other characteristics that need not to be strictly related to ethnic, religious, or regional characteristics.<sup>124</sup> For the sake of his analysis, Dahl referred to subcultural pluralism, to the presence of ethnic, religious, or regional subcultures with objective differences in language, religion, race, or physical stock.

"A polyarchy is more frequently found in relatively homogeneous countries than in countries with a great amount of subcultural pluralism."<sup>125</sup> Since gaining its independence from Spain in 1821, El Salvador has been a country with a single predominant subculture or

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<sup>122</sup>Dahl, 103.

<sup>123</sup>Dahl, 105.

<sup>124</sup>Dahl, 106, footnote 1.

<sup>125</sup>Dahl, 108.

ethnic group. Salvadorans are tied to the Catholic Church and come from the same ethnic background. During the years of civil war, new religious beliefs were introduced into the country, but more than 90 percent of Salvadorans are still Catholic. Based on this analysis, El Salvador rates a 9 for subcultural pluralism.

**6. Condition VI - Domination by a Foreign Power.**

"The destiny of a country is never wholly in the hands of its own people."<sup>126</sup> In some cases, domination by a foreign power is likely to come through economic pressure, military power, or diplomatic sanctions. It does not matter what regime is established in a country, national policy-makers must take in account the possible actions and reactions of policy-makers in other states. Dahl stated that "the actions of foreigners may and almost will have some impact on one or more of the conditions discuss in this analysis"<sup>127</sup> and that "the actions of foreigners may drastically alter the options available to a regime without necessarily altering the form of the regime . . . to the extent that the actions of foreigners reduce the options available to a country, the people lose the capacity to govern themselves."<sup>128</sup> He agreed that a weak or temporary foreign domination is more favorable for the development of a polyarchy.

The beginning of the civil war in 1979 marked the beginning of El Salvador's economic dependance. Foreign economic aid was needed to survive the destruction provoked by the armed conflict, although this economic aid was also tied to foreign military, social, and political demands. Indeed, Salvadoran policy-makers were pressured throughout the civil war by foreign actors' agendas. The economic aid received from 1979 to 1995 creates a critical economic situation for El Salvador, because the external debt has grown to such an extent that the country cannot separate easily from foreign influence. Salvadoran policy-makers continue to be pressured by foreign actors tying the hands of the Salvadoran government. Based on this examination, El Salvador rates a 4 for domination by a foreign power.

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<sup>126</sup>Dahl, 189.

<sup>127</sup>Dahl, 190.

<sup>128</sup>Dahl, 190.

## 7. Condition VII - Belief of Political Activist.

"The beliefs of the political activists are a key stage in the complex processes by which historical sequences or subcultural cleavages, for example, are converted into support for one kind of regime or another."<sup>129</sup> Dahl divided this condition into six characteristics.

The first characteristic identified by Dahl was that "the greater the belief within a given country in the legitimacy of the institution of polyarchy, the greater the chances of polyarchy . . . to believe in the institution of polyarchy means to believe, at the very least, in the legitimacy of both public contestation and participation."<sup>130</sup> In El Salvador from 1932 to early 1982, government legitimacy remained overshadowed by the oligarchical-military dominance and the rejection of free elections -- two elements that impeded legitimacy. After the free legislative elections of 1982, and with the military out of the political apparatus, the Salvadoran people began to believe in the legitimacy of the government. This belief was reinforced later with the presidential elections of 1984. Those individuals who remained isolated and alienated from the political system in the past were invited to participate in the political race. Today, most of the Salvadoran people accept the legitimacy of the elected government, although there are still some individuals who consider the government illegitimate. Based on this analysis, El Salvador rates a 7 for the beliefs of political activist on the legitimacy of national institutions.

The second characteristic cited by Dahl, and accepted by various writers, is the importance of beliefs or attitudes toward authority. Harry Eckstein hypothesized that a "democratic regime will be more stable if the authority patterns in the government were 'congruent' with the patterns in other institutions and associations in the country."<sup>131</sup> To make the point in an extreme form, Dahl said that "if most of the individuals of a country believe that the only proper relation of people to their government is one of complete hierarchy, of rulers to subjects, of command and obedience, the chances that the regime will be hegemonic are, surely, high."<sup>132</sup> In El Salvador, hierarchic authority is not seen by political society, institutions and organizations as a facilitator for developing compromise solutions. They still believe that allowing the government to have its constitutional authority will promote

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<sup>129</sup>Dahl, 124.

<sup>130</sup>Dahl, 129.

<sup>131</sup>Harry Eckstein, Division and Cohesion in Democracy: A Study of Norway (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1966), app. B (1961), and passim.

<sup>132</sup>Dahl, 141.

more political conflict and less conciliation. Given this examination, El Salvador rates a 7 for the beliefs of political activist on the legitimacy of unilateral authority.

Dahl's third characteristic is the expectations of the people about the effectiveness of different regimes in dealing with critical problems.<sup>133</sup> Dahl stated that "since we are dealing with the beliefs of political activists or leaders, a 'problem' exists and is 'critical' if it is perceived as such by a significant proportion of activists or leaders."<sup>134</sup> Dahl suggested that "expectations about governmental effectiveness can be a more or less fixed element in the political culture of a country . . ."<sup>135</sup> Then, beliefs about governmental effectiveness can be strongly influenced both by political socialization and by the way the performance of different regimes is perceived. They may reinforce, weaken, or alter prevailing beliefs about authority. If a government is perceived as effective, its success will enhance the prestige of the authority patterns it embodies. The reverse will happen if it fails.

In El Salvador, beliefs of political activists or leaders about government effectiveness are tied to only one element, how well and soon the government solves national problems. If the government manages to solve the problems in a way that is accepted by the rest of political leaders, then the government is seen as effective. If the government fails, it is the fault of the government party. Governmental effectiveness is not seen by Salvadoran politicians as a group effort but rather as a party effort. Political socialization is far from being consolidated in El Salvador among political elites. Based on this analysis, El Salvador rates a 3 for the beliefs of political activist on the effectiveness of a polyarchy to resolve major problems.

Dahl's fourth characteristic is "the extent to which members of a political system have trust and confidence in their fellow political actors."<sup>136</sup> Moderated distrust is good for politicians, but not in the extreme. Dahl suggested at least three ways that mutual trust favors polyarchy and public contestation, while extreme distrust favors hegemony. In the first place, polyarchy requires two-way or mutual communication, and two-way communication is impeded when elites do not trust one another. Second, a certain level of mutual trust is required in order for people to join freely in order to promote their goals. And third, conflicts

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<sup>133</sup>Cf. Seymour Martin Lipset, Political Man (Garden City: Doubleday, 1960), 78.

<sup>134</sup>Dahl, 144.

<sup>135</sup>Dahl, 145.

<sup>136</sup>Sidney Verba, "Conclusion: Comparative Political Culture," in Pye and Verba, Political Culture, 535.



are more threatening among people who distrust one another. Public contestation requires a good deal of trust in one's opponent: they may be opponents, but they are not implacable enemies.<sup>137</sup>

In El Salvador, political distrust is a daily event among politicians. Twelve years of civil war did not change the attitudes, rather, it built a stronger feeling of political distrust. This behavior can be affirmed by visiting the National Legislative Assembly, the most distrustful forum of the country. A political opponent in El Salvador means nothing more than a political enemy. Elite's trust evolves only if political parties or an individual's interest have first priority. Consequently, the peace accords of 1992 cannot be contemplated as a sign of trust among Salvadoran political activists. Political trust is a non-existent condition in El Salvador. Given the distrustful behavior of political elites in El Salvador, it rates a 2 for the beliefs of political activist to trust others.

The fifth characteristic presented by Dahl is cooperation and competition. Trust is obviously related to the capacity of the people to engage freely and easily in cooperative actions.<sup>138</sup> As with trust, the inability to cooperate reduces the chances to obtain a polyarchy. Dahl suggested that "the relevant units for cooperation or conflict need not be individuals but aggregates-factions, parties, social classes, regions, and the like."<sup>139</sup> Dahl proposed three different ways in which someone might view cooperation and conflict. "At one extreme, relations among actors may be viewed as a strictly competitive (zero-sum) game, where the central rule is: what you gain, I lose, and what I lose, you gain."<sup>140</sup> Since everyone has everything to lose and nothing to gain by cooperating, political actors think that the best strategy to follow is strictly competition. In other words, an actor will fight to win completely on every issue rather than compromise or cooperate. The second view is strictly cooperative, "here the rule is: not only is there no conflict between us but our interest are identical or so intertwined that we stand to gain or lose together."<sup>141</sup> Here the best political strategy is to cooperate completely with each other and avoid conflict by all means. The third

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<sup>137</sup>Dahl, 151.

<sup>138</sup>Morris Rosenberg, "Misanthropy and Attitudes Toward International Affairs," Journal of Conflict Resolution 1, no.4 (December 1957): 340.

<sup>139</sup>Dahl, 153.

<sup>140</sup>Dahl, 153.

<sup>141</sup>Dahl, 154.

and final view sees actors' relationships as cooperative-competitive. "Conflict, competition, and cooperation are all viewed as normal aspects of social relationships which contribute to a healthy, vigorous, progressive society."<sup>142</sup>

In El Salvador, the political environment can be categorized as strictly competitive. Generally, Salvadoran actors do not understand the meaning of the word cooperation and Salvadoran parties or individuals from all ideologies think that a political confrontation or conflict means nothing more than a zero-sum game. Often, they cannot agree on the rules of the political game and fail to understand that cooperation with an opponent may ensure a better political outcome. Salvadoran politicians often place their parties' or individual interests above the national interests. Based on the above analysis, El Salvador rates a 2 for strictly competitive; a 3 for strictly cooperative; and a 2 for cooperative-competitive.

In Dahl's sixth characteristic, compromise is seen as a belief necessary and desirable among political elites. Dahl affirmed that the important strategy in a conflict is to search for mutually beneficial solutions. Far from being a betrayal of principle, a compromise is essentially a good thing, and a spirit of compromise vital.

In El Salvador, compromise is seen as a sign of political weakness. Since there is no sense of cooperativeness among Salvadoran actors, political compromise prevails among them. Their political strategy to reach a compromise is just a temporary behavior. Even the peace accords of 1992 seems to reflect this temporary compromise strategy. Salvadoran political compromises are deplored, cooperation is extremely difficult, and conflicts are more likely to go unsettled. As a result of the above analysis, El Salvador rates a 2 in the belief of political activists on the necessity and desire to compromise.

#### **D. CONCLUSION**

Table 1.2 shows a positive view of the prospects for democracy in El Salvador. Many other considerations cast doubt on the accuracy of that assessment. Table 1.2 delineates a range of conditions that need to be addressed to analyze the prospects for El Salvador's democratic future. To the writer, some of these conditions are more critical than others. For the sake of this study, political culture, political society and institutions must be studied, as must as socioeconomic development and economic policies, the military, and international

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<sup>142</sup>Dahl, 155.

influences. Addressing these conditions in this chapter allows one to be cautiously optimistic about the country's future.

### 1. Political Culture

El Salvador's political culture has a long history of brutal repression and absence of democratic tradition. One hundred years of oligarchic control (1837-1932) and fifty years of oligarchical-military alliance (1932-1982) frustrated the intentions of the Salvadoran people to achieve political representation through elections. This repression also denied the citizens the right to seek a greater voice in civil affairs. Political participation and inclusiveness of the people were limited and rigorously controlled throughout these two periods.

The twelve year civil war erupted due to the denial of these basic social, political, and economic rights. The civil war only produced a more polarized Salvadoran society, more poverty, and more political disorder. Overcoming this legacy of repression and social polarization in the post war era will be one of the greatest challenges of the consolidation of democracy in El Salvador. Political society must play an important role in this post-war challenge.

### 2. Political Society

As Table 1.2 shows, political society is one of the major barriers to the consolidation of democracy in El Salvador. The skills, values, and strategies of political leaders have been defined as essential elements for the formation of democracy.<sup>143</sup> Gunther and Higley reaffirmed this statement by stating that:

A key to the stability and survival of democratic regimes is the establishment of substantial consensus among elites concerning rules of democratic political game and the worth of democratic institutions. The establishment of this political consensus is the central element in the consolidation of new democratic regimes.<sup>144</sup>

Today, this political consensus is far from being achieved. Politics is perceived by Salvadoran elites as a war rather than a bargaining process and political outcomes are seen as a zero-sum, not positive. The skills, values, and strategies of Salvadoran politicians are

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<sup>143</sup>This is based on the concepts developed in Larry Diamond, Juan J. Linz, and Seymour Martin Lipset, ed., Democracy in Developing Countries: Latin America (Boulder: Lynne Rienner Publishers, 1989), 14-15.

<sup>144</sup>Gunther and Higley, 3.

often geared toward party and individual interests. National interests are generally secondary in their agendas.

Gunther and Higley agreed that "no democratic regime is ever fully consolidated in the ideal-typical sense, democratic consolidation is best regarded as a process of adaptation/freezing of democratic structures and norms, which come to be accepted by part or all of civil society."<sup>145</sup> A consolidated democracy must have a convergence of thoughts between political elites and the masses. The absence of this convergence brings about other types of political regimes which can fall within one of these three categories: unconsolidated democracy, stable limited democracy, and pseudo-democracy.<sup>146</sup> El Salvador follows an unconsolidated democracy because "the trappings of procedural democracy exist and there is substantial mass participation, but there is no real elite consensus about democratic rules of the game and institutions," and "elites are instead disunified in the sense that they distrust and have little traffic with one another."<sup>147</sup> The erratic implementation of the peace accords, the renewal of socio-political violence in San Salvador, the negative public statements made by elites representing the relevant sectors, are just a few examples of the unconsolidated democracy in El Salvador.

In conclusion, the tendencies of political society in El Salvador appear to be harmful for the future. Political elites apparently believe that democracy can best protect the people's interests, achieve stability, and bring order to the polity. These values seem to disappear when politicians formulate strategies to develop national objectives. Salvadoran elites need to be more unified in the sense that they must leave behind the negative political legacies of the past. They cannot continue to see political outcomes as a war or in zero-sum terms; they need to build an environment of trust among themselves; they need to be more professional in the sense that they cannot continue to be *políticos de oportunidad* (politicians of opportunity or opportunists); and political parties cannot afford to be "antisystem parties". Antisystem parties are defined as "institutions that vote against constitutions or organize boycotts of constitutional referenda; they regularly condemn the regime and articulate their vision of the alternative regime they seek; and they often try to subvert existing institutions,

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<sup>145</sup>Gunther and Higley, 4.

<sup>146</sup>For more information refer to Gunther and Higley, 6-7.

<sup>147</sup>Gunther and Higley, 5.

even when elected to serve in them."<sup>148</sup> They often criticize the government, but they do little to improve it. Instead, they promote social and political unrest. El Salvador cannot move toward a consolidated democracy when those who run the country lack professionalism, consensus, and political commitment. If there is no political will and commitment to overcome their own problems, they cannot guide the country toward a democratic consolidation. Politicians agreed in the peace accords to strengthen the state so that a great majority of the population can fully accept its legitimacy. As reconciliation progresses and external actors reduce their involvement, the state's legitimacy seems to be weakening, and a sector of the Salvadoran political society appears to reinforce this situation.

### 3. Socioeconomic Development

The basic needs of the Salvadoran population, depleted during the oligarchical-military period and further increased during the armed conflict demand prompt and effective attention. Despite the efforts by former President Cristiani and his successor, Calderon Sol, the socioeconomic development of the country has been criticized as a laissez-faire approach that favors the wealthy and places the costs of adjustments on the shoulders of the neediest sectors of the population.<sup>149</sup> The economic reforms established by the past two administrations are questioned by their level of commitment and they are likely to be inadequate for the severe problems facing Salvadoran society.

Several of these problems are:

1. The number of Salvadorans living in extreme poverty is 30% in 1993. This poverty is especially severe in rural areas.<sup>150</sup>
2. More than 41% of the population do not have basic sanitation. Potable water is accessible to 55% of the population.<sup>151</sup>
3. Infant mortality is 50 for each 1000 individuals and most of these mortalities are related to either infectious diseases or malnutrition.<sup>152</sup>

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<sup>148</sup>Gunther and Higley, 8.

<sup>149</sup>Interview with opposition leaders, La Prensa Grafica Newspaper, 21 February 1995.

<sup>150</sup>FUSADES, Soluciones Sociales y Reformas Economicas: El Salvador-Estrategia 1994-99, San Salvador: El Salvador, March 1994, 3.

<sup>151</sup>FUSADES, 4.

<sup>152</sup>FUSADES, 4.

4. More than 27% of the population over 15 years old is illiterate and on average, each Salvadoran attends school for 4.32 years.<sup>153</sup>
5. The level of GNP per capita is not sufficient to promote the needed socioeconomic development.
6. More than 42% of the population is without access to health services.<sup>154</sup>

By signing the peace accords, the government and the FMLN affirmed that one of the prerequisites for democratic consolidation is the sustained economic and social development of the country.<sup>155</sup> The end of the war prevented further decline in living standards and improved the economy, especially after the transfer of military spending to social welfare. Nevertheless, serious disputes over economic and social agreements have arisen, especially over land tenure.

The country is in need of long-term international support at a time when demands are greater than the limited pool of funds available. Salvadorans need to learn how to solve their own problems because international support is not a lifetime warranty. Socioeconomic problems can be resolved by Salvadorans only if political society formulates and implements national strategies aimed to overcome these problems. In order for national policy-makers to develop such strategies, a total overhaul of the government and its bureaucratic agencies is required. Political elites need to prioritize national interests rather than their party and individual interests. The restructuring and the modernization of the state is another future challenge of Salvadoran elites.

#### **4. The Military**

After the full implementation of the peace accords related to the armed forces, the power of officers who opposed the peace talks diminished. The hard-liners in the military were marginalized from the rest of the organization. Now, the leading officers have become more pragmatic because they recognize the need for a more professional role in society. They are also preparing for the future because they cannot prevent the democratic changes in the country. Today, the military leadership is not full of reconstructed democrats, rather,

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<sup>153</sup>FUSADES, 4.

<sup>154</sup>FUSADES, 12.

<sup>155</sup>Draft, Economic and Social Questions Working Paper of the parties to the negotiations, United Nations, December 31, 1991, 1.

most officers decided to compromise with these changes because they believed them to be the best way to protect their institutional interest.

In the end, the armed forces accepted their reduced role in society as provided by the peace accords and the Constitution. The armed forces are becoming more professional and more apolitical. The presence of the military does not represent a major barrier to the consolidation of democracy in El Salvador. Civil society needs to understand that the Salvadoran armed forces do not challenge the democratic system, but rather it is the political society that causes that impression. The armed forces are nothing more than an instrument of the political apparatus.

## **5. International Influence**

International cooperation with El Salvador will decrease in the upcoming years. The economic problems of the United States and other nations, the end of the Cold War, and the economic needs of Eastern European nations are factors that lower the priority of and attention to El Salvador's problems. The external economic aid to the country in the 1980s played a very important role because it rescued the chaotic economic situation. The reduction of external economic aid is not seen as a limitation to the economic growth of the country, instead, it will promote a more efficient use of internal resources. Therefore, the biggest challenge that economic elites have at this moment is to gradually substitute this external aid with national resources. Once again, political elites play an important role in the formulation of economic strategies.

The complete implementation of the peace accords and the future of the country lie in the full acceptance by Salvadorans, especially the political society, of both the uncertainty and the certainty that characterizes democracy. "In a democracy, no party is able to intervene if the new power struggles are perceived as prejudicial to its interest. Yet, all parties secure a level of certainty in exchange: the knowledge that the political game will be played according to democratic rules."<sup>156</sup> As the uncertainties of the political process become certainties, democracy will grow in El Salvador, and democracy will be consolidated.

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<sup>156</sup>Joseph S. Tulchin, Is There a Transition to Democracy in El Salvador, Boulder and London: Lynne Rienner Publishers, 1992, 200.

## VI. CONCLUSION

This study began by examining the socio-historical changes in El Salvador from the commercial revolution of 1870 through the political transition of 1984. As explained in Chapter II, from 1870 to 1979 El Salvador was an oligarchic-authoritarian republic in which political competition took place only among economic elite groups. The lower class was too large and the presence of the military as government and as institution was an element for the oligarchy to retain power. Also there was little room for any political expression. The expansion of the middle class in the 1970s and their demands for free elections made the military mediate between them and the economic elites. These events, together with a weak economy, ignited the cycle of violence in the 1970s and the civil war of the 1980s.

From 1972 to 1981, El Salvador aspired to move toward a democratic system, but circumstances overshadowed these efforts. Stepan's paths to redemocratization explain the Salvadoran case. In 1972, the country followed Stepan's Path Six (Party Pact - with or without consociational elements), which failed due to the power and the imposition of the military regime. In 1979, Salvadorans once again tried to follow Stepan's Path Five (Society-led Regime Termination). The Left and other opposition parties led the lower and middle classes to diffuse massive violent protests. These actions were aimed at destroying the government's legitimacy. The "military-as-government" responded with repressive actions through the "military-as-institution." These repressive actions sparked Stepan's Path Four(c) (Redemocratization led by "Military-as-Institution"). Young military officers organized a coup in 1979 and overthrew the military regime. The coup established a reformist junta and the country returned to Stepan's Path Six (Party Pact). Here, opposition parties and the military united to lay the foundation for a more democratic El Salvador. Despite these political changes, there was one major barrier to cross - the civil war.

The Salvadoran civil war developed due to political and social reasons. The FMLN stated that "even if radical changes had taken place in the country before 1979, the Left and the Communist Community believed that a revolution was the only viable solution to the Salvadoran crisis."<sup>157</sup>

After the FMLN's final offensive in 1981, El Salvador's social and political life changed profoundly. The civil war exploded and Salvadoran and international elites began to search

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<sup>157</sup>Speech given by Joaquin Villalobos at a Pound-Table Conference "Peace and Reconciliation in El Salvador".



for alternatives to end the civil war. After this armed insurrection, political intentions to end the conflict appeared for the first time. This military action was unsuccessful and sparked the Left to develop a new general strategy -- to end the conflict over a negotiating table. During this period, Jose Napoleon Duarte's junta developed the first government political proposal to end the civil war. Neither the FMLN's proposal nor the government's proposal created a decisive process of negotiation.

From 1981 to 1984, the civil war intensified. More than 40,000 Salvadorans died as a result of the civil war, and the bombs and the bullets did little to settle the country's crisis. Most of the Salvadoran population believed that since the armed conflict developed due to social and political reasons, its solution was not in the blood of the people but over a negotiating table. With the election of Duarte in 1984, a new era of peace talks began. President Duarte invited the FMLN-FDR to the negotiating table in 1984 in La Palma. This meeting united both parties over a negotiating table to resolve the conflict.

Over a period of four years, Duarte tried to bring about peace through peace talks with the FMLN-FDR, but the negotiations were full of uncertainties. Despite Duarte's efforts, the outcome of his negotiations (1984-1989) was unsuccessful. When Alfredo Cristiani, the candidate of the right-wing ARENA party, won the presidential elections in March 1989, many observers feared that the hopes for El Salvador's peace and democracy would have to be postponed, if not abandoned. But in his inaugural speech, Cristiani put those fears to rest. Cristiani wanted a political settlement with the FMLN. A series of wide-ranging negotiations meetings between both parties began in 1989 and culminated with the signing of the peace accords in Mexico 1992. No one in the 1980s could have imagined that El Salvador's civil war would end in 1991 with a consensus in favor of nonviolence, democratic norms, and respect for human rights.

As explained in Chapter III, if one is to measure why it was Cristiani, not Duarte, who managed to reach an elite settlement, one must look at the influential national and international variables of each negotiation period. The Salvadoran armed conflict brought in many outside actors: the United States, the former Soviet Union, regional influences (like Mexico and Venezuela), supporters of the FMLN (such as Cuba and Nicaragua), and some Western European powers. Some of these actors tried to micromanage El Salvador's crisis through diplomatic, economic and military means. But, in the end, it was the Salvadorans who decided their own destiny over a negotiating table. Peace finally came to El Salvador after twelve years, although, the civil war left the country in a worse crisis than the 1970s.

Because of the high cost of the civil war, in human and monetary terms, in 1992 El Salvador achieved peace through negotiated accords.

With the signing of the peace accords in Chapultepec, Mexico in 1992, the Salvadoran government and the FMLN reaffirmed the Geneva agreements' goals: "To end the armed conflict through means of political negotiations at the shortest time possible; promote El Salvador's democratization; guarantee unrestricted human rights; and reunite the Salvadoran society."<sup>158</sup> The signing of the peace accords also led the country to a new phase in its political history. The accords delineated the enlargement of the people's social and political expectations within a more democratic framework, and ended the civil war. The peace accords provided a blueprint for a more democratic El Salvador, but political maneuvering and arduous negotiations over implementation defined the new rules of the game. The problematic implementation process raised the question of whether the accords truly represented a social pact among Salvadorans, a temporary elite settlement, or a superficial consensus imposed by international actors.<sup>159</sup>

Despite the efforts of ONUSAL and COPAZ to consolidate the pending accords, the implementation process remains full of uncertainties. As Chapter IV explains, important elements contributing to these problems include: (a) the dearth of adequate representation and knowledge of the government negotiating commission; (b) the lack of elite commitment or consensus to implement reforms; (c) the deficiency of competent verification mechanisms of ONUSAL and domestic bodies; (d) the inability of international actors to deliver on time technical, economic and human assistance; and (e) the reliance on international actors to resolve internal problems.

It is essential that other nations, looking at El Salvador as an example for future conflict resolution, understand the nature of the problems that challenge the implementation of the pending peace accords so they can obtain a more democratic society, a sustainable peace, a firm elite settlement, and a more united political society than El Salvador.

After the elections of 1994, Salvadorans learned that without a democratic system the country had little hope of overcoming the lethal legacies of authoritarianism, terrorism, subversion, and civil war. Today, Salvadorans also understand that without the full implementation of the pending accords, the consolidation of El Salvador's democracy can

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<sup>158</sup>Geneva Agreements, 04 April 1990.

<sup>159</sup>Baloyra, 77.

never be achieved. Even now that the civil war has ended, many political analysts view the consolidation of El Salvador's democracy as an extremely laborious process. As Chapter V explains, despite this criticism, one can conclude, via Dahl's analysis, that a positive view for democracy in El Salvador exists. Many other circumstances cast doubt on the accuracy of this assessment. Dahl's analysis gave the chance to examine a range of conditions needed to guide El Salvador's democratization. For the sake of this study, political culture, political society and institutions must be examined, as must socioeconomic development and economic policies, the military, and international influences. The goal of addressing these conditions is to allow one to be cautiously optimistic about El Salvador's future.

Obviously, the full implementation of the pending accords and the future of the country depend on the acceptance by Salvadorans, especially political society, of the new "rules of the game." As these rules become institutionalized, democracy will grow in El Salvador and democratic consolidation will be reached.

With this study in mind, other nations must view El Salvador not as a model (a step-by-step guide) but as an example for conflict resolution. Each nation has particular political, social, economic and military characteristics, and influential variables that might require a different approach to formulate its own conflict resolution. Those unique characteristics should be considered in applying, in a flexible manner, some of the lessons learned in the Salvadoran case.

## APPENDIX A.

### The Negotiation Meetings (1984-1992).

#### I. President Duarte's Negotiation Period (1984-1989).<sup>1</sup>

##### The meeting of La Palma (15 October 1984).

On October 8, 1984, President Duarte's speech to the United Nations delineated a peace initiative, and invited the FMLN-FDR to the first in a series of peace talks of 15 October 1984. Duarte's peace initiative had two objectives: to discuss a detailed negotiation process that would incorporate the FMLN's combatants into El Salvador's democratic system and to invite the Left to participate in the upcoming elections. Duarte's initiative came about after a series of proposals and mediation offers made by various national and international actors between 1981 and 1984. The outcome of this meeting was the creation of a mixed negotiating commission responsible for the analysis of the peace proposals presented by both parties, the development of a mechanism by which all segments of the Salvadoran society could be incorporated into the peace process, and the study of a plan by which peace could be reached in a short time.

##### The meeting of Ayagualo (30 November 1984).

During this initial meeting, the government and the FMLN presented their basic demands. The government proposed steps to humanize and reduce the level of conflict. President Duarte asked for the elimination of assassinations, kidnaping, threats, attacks in rural and urban cities, and reprisals against the families of government and armed forces personnel. He also demanded an end to the sabotage and destruction of private property, commercial and industrial establishments, and government property.

As a counter-proposal, the FMLN-FDR presented their *Propuesta Global de Solucion Politica Negociada para la Paz* (Broad Proposal of Negotiated Political Solution for Peace) in which they outlined three separate phases. Phase one called for the creation of political conditions and basic individual rights to find a negotiated solution, an agreement to promote human rights, the elimination of United States influence, and the cessation of an arms buildup. Phase two demanded the suppression of hostilities against the insurgents, the participation of the FMLN-FDR in the government, a discussion regarding the cease-fire agreement, and the

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<sup>1</sup>The information regarding each of the meetings during President Duarte was gather by the writer from varios Salvadoran newspapers, microfilms, and magazines.

return of thousands of FMLN refugees. Finally, phase three called for constitutional reforms, a reorganization of the armed forces, and the announcement and scheduling of national elections.

With the framework of this negotiation meeting, the FMLN returned to the countryside and restructured its revolutionary strategy. The FMLN developed a new strategy that allowed its guerrilla units to confront the armed forces in terms of a conventional war. In 1984, the FMLN organized its combatant units around military-strategic areas in which the FMLN's General Command planned to concentrate their military actions. The FMLN's strategy of organizing mass demonstrations became a second priority for the Command. Despite the increase in logistical support from Cuba and Nicaragua, guerrilla units felt harmed by the Armed Forces. The United States supplied the training and the weapons to direct effective military operations against the FMLN's concentrations.

Evidently, the guerrillas could not afford to fight in a conventional war. Therefore, the FMLN formulated a new military strategy that aimed to use mass demonstrations in conjunction with military actions, as was done in the early 1980s. With these activities, social agitation increased from 1984 to 1986 and the peace talks were stopped.

#### The unsuccessful Meeting of Sesori (19 September 1986).

This meeting was a new negotiation attempt but it failed due to the absence of the FMLN's delegation. In late 1986, the FMLN presented a new negotiation strategy to the Salvadoran media called *Oferta Política del FMLN-FDR* (Political Offer of the FMLN-FDR). Here, the Left demanded a search for the means of conflict resolution, an opening of political participation in the government, a cease-fire, and the respect for human rights. During this year, the FMLN developed a new war strategy called *Contra-Ofensiva* (Counter-Offensive) which established action lines for its military units and mass organization. With the use of political and labor movements, the counteroffensive was framed in a deepening of the military activities and mass demonstrations. These mass activities had the goal of creating an environment of insurrection in the capital, and then carrying out violent actions. These types of actions increased in 1987 but the government neutralized them. This caused the FMLN to suffer a blow in its action lines, and obligated the mass demonstrations tactic to accelerate. Due to the loss of the armed forces presence around the country, the FMLN's grew stronger there.

By early 1987, the FMLN-FDR general strategy was divided into two main alternatives: The Extended Popular War and the Negotiated Agreements. Each of these alternatives had different characteristics. The Extended Popular War had the military objective to obtain force accumulation. The negotiation alternative became a parallel strategy to the military and the mass

actions. The involvement of the FDR in this strategy was to achieve political integration to win popular elections in 1989. Evidently, in 1987 the FMLN was committed to a military solution and the FDR preferred a negotiated solution to the armed conflict. This division prevailed throughout the negotiation process during Duarte's peace talks.

By mid-1987, two political events took place in the country that had great relevance for the political structure. First, on May 26, the FMLN-FDR announced a double proposal to President Duarte and the High Command of the Armed Forces that outlined the idea of a political solution. Second, on August 7, *Los Acuerdos de Esquipulas II* (The Agreements of Esquipulas II)<sup>2</sup> were signed by the Central American presidents. These agreements contained new elements that influenced the peace talks. The most relevant were: a debate initiative with all unarmed national groups of political opposition with those that had accepted the amnesty. The creation of a National Reconciliation Commission that would verify all aspects of the reconciliation process, and would also monitor the fulfillment of the agreements related to the amnesty, the cease-fire, the democratization process, and the upcoming elections. Finally, the agreements called for the cessation of aid to irregular forces .

#### **The Meeting of San Salvador (4-5 October 1987).**

The peace talks between the Government and the FMLN-FDR resumed in the headquarters of the Apostolic Church. In this meeting, both parties agreed to create two commissions to seek and prepare accords related to a cease-fire process and other aspects of Esquipulas II. There were no concrete agreements between both parties at this point and another meeting was scheduled to continue the discussions.

#### **The Meeting of Caracas (21-23 October 1987).**

In this meeting, the Government and the FMLN-FDR did not come to an agreement. By October 21, delays existed when both commissions discussed the norms by which to carry out the cease-fire. As a result, a new meeting was scheduled to be held in Mexico on the 22th. The FMLN, though, ceased the peace talks due to the assassination of the non-governmental Commission of Human Rights representative. The government delineated a policy of nonviolence, pardon and forgiveness. The rebels were urged to accept the arrangements and the spirit of Esquipulas II, a cease-fire and amnesty, to disarm and to incorporate in the political

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<sup>2</sup>All the presidents from Central America got together in Guatemala and formulated these accords to promote democratic systems in the region through economic, social, cultural, and political treaties.

democratic process. On the other hand, the FMLN-FDR demanded a government reorganization that incorporated all social sectors that favored a political solution. This newly organized government would promote the conditions for free elections.

In Esquipulas II, the Central American presidents established a period of 90 days for the agreements to emerge. The purpose of this measure was to search for El Salvador's reconciliation, but concrete results were not obtained. However, despite the limited improvements of the peace talks, the government promoted an amnesty and a unilateral cease-fire that went into effect on 5 November 1987. The FMLN also declared a unilateral cease-fire.

In 1988, the FMLN-FDR introduced a new proposal called *Ofensiva Diplomática* (Diplomatic Offensive). This proposal sought to increase international support in favor of the FMLN, and to prevent ARENA's victory in the presidential elections of 1989. By the beginning of 1989, the FMLN had redefined its military strategy and the possibilities of a new military offensive were evident.

On 23 January 1989, the FMLN, before the presidential elections of March, presented a proposal aimed at converting the elections into a contribution to the peace process. They asked to postpone the elections to September 15, 1989, and demanded the following: an end to the repression by the armed forces; the keeping of the armed forces in their quarters; the integration of the Democratic Convergence to the Central Electoral Council; and the promulgation of a new Electoral Code. They also demanded the right of voting to those Salvadorans living outside the country. If these demands were answered, the FMLN promised to respect the activities of the political parties, to declare a two-day truce before and after the elections, and to accept the electoral result of September elections.

In this framework, the government accepted the FMLN-FDR's demands except for the postponement of the elections. This answer motivated the FMLN to stop and boycott the presidential elections. This action did not succeed, though, due to the response of the vast majority of the population who went to the polls. This popular response motivated the FMLN to promote an end to the civil war through a political settlement, and to retreat from its military commitment. In March 1989, President Duarte passed the government to the newly elected President Alfredo Cristiani.

## II. President Cristiani's Negotiation Process (1989-1992).

### The meeting of Mexico (September 1989).<sup>3</sup>

At this meeting, the FMLN-FDR, through Commander Joaquin Villalobos, announced its proposal called *Propuesta para Encontrar la Democratizacion* (Proposal to Achieve a Democratization). It also called for the cessation of hostilities and the lasting peace in El Salvador. This proposal had three important components: an observance of a cease-fire starting on 15 September 1989; an initial phase for the incorporation of the FMLN; a definitive end of the armed conflict; and the total integration of the FMLN to the political life starting 31 January 1990.

The Government proposed to create a negotiation commission with a permanent character whose purpose was to develop activities related to the peace process. At the end of this meeting, both delegations signed an agreement called *Acuerdos de Mexico* (Accords of Mexico). In this agreement both parties were committed to carry out permanent peace talks with maximum seriousness, reciprocal guarantees, and an efficient framework to achieve a conflict resolution.

### The Meeting of San Jose (16-17 October 1989).

Prior to this meeting, military actions on both sides increased throughout the country. The FMLN disregarded the agreement to cease sabotage activities, and increased its military campaign. Since the meeting in Mexico, the debate was full of tension, political violence, and urban terrorism. Acts of sabotage increased in the capital and the FMLN developed a campaign against what they called the repressive actions of the ARENA government and the Armed Forces.

In San Jose, the FMLN arrived with the same negotiation agenda as proposed in Mexico along with two additional points: (1) the measures for the auto-purge and the professional education of the armed forces; and (2) judicial system reforms. The proposal of the government mentioned a cease-fire and the end of sabotage actions. But these topics did not prosper due to the irrational procedures presented by both parts to end the armed conflict. After this meeting, violence increased dramatically.

Meetings scheduled for the 20th and 21st of November 1989 in Caracas were not held because the FMLN launched an insurgent offensive. The FMLN declared publicly that this offensive developed because the negotiation process was full of disputes.

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<sup>3</sup>El Diario de Hoy Newspaper, San Salvador: El Salvador, 01 October 1989, pg. 2.



### The FMLN Offensive (11 November 1989).

This offensive was named *Fuera los Facistas, Febe Elizabeth Vive* (Expel the Fascist, Febe Elizabeth Lives). This offensive had four objectives. First, it aimed to stop the socioeconomic programs developed by President Cristiani. Second, it tried to reinforce the repressive image of the armed forces. Third, it sought to generate an image of strength for the FMLN, and finally, it attempted to create dissatisfaction against the government.<sup>4</sup>

The armed forces responded quickly to this armed insurrection and managed to control the situation. The FMLN failed to reach their objective for two primary reasons. First, they never had the support of the population. Second, the combatant units of the FMLN were not prepared to fight in the streets of San Salvador. The Salvadoran people clearly announced to the FMLN that they were tired of the war. Civil society demanded that the FMLN incorporate itself into the political process of the country, and to resolve the armed conflict over the negotiating table. This popular reaction obligated the FMLN to resume the peace talks with the government.<sup>5</sup>

### The Debate Efforts after the Offensive.

It was fair to think that the effects of this offensive would create a hostile climate among the negotiating parties. However, President Cristiani proposed to begin the peace talks in December of 1989 under one condition - that the FMLN stop all terrorist actions against the civilian population. In Costa Rica, the presidents of Central America expressed their total support for the government of El Salvador and condemned the FMLN for their offensive. Within a setting of international negotiation proposals, both delegations requested the participation of the United Nations in the peace talks. With the participation of the United Nations, the peace talks developed in a different framework. This new dialogue framework evolved from the impact that the offensive had on all Salvadorans, the acceptance of the peace talks by the U.S. Government, the mediation of the Secretary-General of the U.N. Javier Perez de Cuellar, the flexible proposals of the FMLN, and the pressure from national and international organizations.

After 10 years of civil war, the FMLN sensed that a negotiated solution was the only viable way to end the armed conflict. Thus, the FMLN called for the establishment of a social, political, and economic regime that would assure the fulfillment of the will of the Salvadoran people. The objective of this regime was to maintain and to reproduce a democratic system with the consensus of the Salvadoran people. With this framework, the government and the FMLN

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<sup>4</sup>Ruben Zamora, "For El Salvador: Democracy Before Peace," New York Times, 24 January 1990, A15.

<sup>5</sup>La Prensa Grafica, 10 November 1989, pg. 1.

resumed the peace talks.

**The meeting of Geneva (04 April 1990).<sup>6</sup>**

In this meeting, the Salvadoran government and the FMLN established an agreement. The purposes of this agreement was to end the armed conflict by a political route in a short period, to encourage the democratization of the country, to guarantee the respect for human rights, and to reunify the Salvadoran society.

The initial goal was to achieve political agreements that would cease the armed confrontation and all activities that jeopardized the rights of the population. These agreements were to be verified by the United Nations and approved by the Security Council. The medium-term goal was to establish the guarantees and necessary conditions for the incorporation of the FMLN combatants to the civil, institutional, and political life of the country. The methodology was that the government and the FMLN would develop a dialogue between both parties with the mediation of the Secretary-General of the United Nations or his representative, and that the Secretary-General would assure that the peace talks were contributing to the success of the negotiation process. The government and the FMLN would assure that their representatives had the authority to discuss and formulate agreements.

The conditions of this agreement were that the government and the FMLN agreed on a private peace process. The Secretary-General or his representative was the only authorized person to provide public information. The Secretary-General, in discreet form, would maintain confidential communication with the U.S. Government, with members of the United Nations, or with other organizations that could contribute to the success of the peace talks. The government and the FMLN agreed that the national political parties and social organizations had an important role in the consolidation of the peace. Both parties identified the need to establish and maintain consultation mechanisms with such organizations.

**The meeting of Caracas (16-20 May 1990).**

For this meeting, the agendas of the government and the FMLN continued to be the same. However, they outlined a new perspective: the total search for a negotiated solution. Both parties continued to promote their efforts to achieve the end of the armed conflict through negotiations.

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<sup>6</sup>Transcript of documents, Geneva, 04 April 1990.

### The meeting of Oaxtepec, Mexico (19 June 1990).

This meeting centered on the purge of the armed forces that later became a strategy of the FMLN to promote a stalemate in the negotiation process. The proposal of the FMLN sought to reduce the size of the military. The government accepted this proposal contingent upon the demobilization of the FMLN units. The fundamental issue of this meeting was not to reduce but to purge the armed forces. The FMLN viewed this condition to be necessary for the democratization of the country.<sup>7</sup>

The purge of the armed forces became a preoccupation for some national and international political sectors, especially the U.S. Congress. This topic was the most controversial of the agenda, and was the reason that greater advances in the negotiations failed to take place.

### The Negotiation Proposals in San Jose I, II and III (July-September 1990).<sup>8</sup>

In San Jose I (Costa Rica), the government proposed a transformation of the Armed Force's doctrine and their new role in the democratic system. The government also accepted and supported the judicial process surrounding the investigation of several assassinations that occurred in previous years.

The FMLN continued to emphasize the topic related to the purging of the armed forces. Its intention was to stop the corruption of military officers and the taking of command posts by officer's *tandas* (graduating class). The Government provided assurance that the purging of the armed forces would take place after the FMLN had been disarmed and demobilized. The meeting ended with a signed agreement establishing the mechanisms to monitor human rights under the United Nations through an organization later known as ONUSAL.

In San Jose II and III, the FMLN again stressed the disappearance of the armed forces. Concrete agreements were not obtained and this failure caused the debate to lose credibility. This also contributed to the continuation of the armed confrontation. Despite the frustration of these meetings, both commissions considered that the negotiation process should continue.

### The Offensive of November 1990.

Despite President Cristiani's speech to the United Nations (October 1990) to continue

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<sup>7</sup>La Prensa Grafica Newspaper interview with Joaquin Villalobos, member of the FMLN negotiation commission, 23 June 1990, pg. 1.

<sup>8</sup>Transcript of documents, San Jose: Costa Rica, 26 July 1990.

with the peace talks, the FMLN launched a new military offensive in November. This offensive had a lower level of intensity and duration than the one in 1989. The FMLN argued that this offensive had the purpose of reenergizing the negotiation process. Again, the FMLN's military offensive did not achieve its objectives for lack of support from the population.

Due to this armed insurrection, the negotiations stopped and the peace process was put in danger. However, the Secretary General of the United Nations brought both parties to the negotiation table. Between December of 1990 and January of 1991, he held private meetings with both negotiating commissions. At the end of these private meetings, the Secretary General announced that the peace talks would resume immediately.<sup>9</sup>

#### **The meeting of Managua (March 1991).**

By early 1991, the FMLN understood that its Marxist-Leninist goals could not be reached by means of force. Moreover, the FMLN presented in Managua, before the Commission of the European Economic Community and the Foreign Relation Ministers of Central America, an initiative to accelerate the peace talks. This proposal discussed the fundamental topics of the agenda of Caracas, 1989, especially those topics that related to the armed forces, constitutional reforms, and a cease-fire. This peace initiative was accepted by the government, and the process continued without major problems.

#### **The meeting of Mexico (April 1991).**

In this meeting, both sides agreed on reforms to the Constitution that related to the armed forces, the judicial system, human rights, and the electoral process. These reforms were presented to the Legislative Assembly after the agreement was reached in Mexico. An execution calendar or time line was also created to ratify these reforms. Several items related to the armed force were left pending due to the refusal of the FMLN to go on with its disarmament and demobilization.

In this meeting, the Truth Commission was created whose responsibility was to investigate the most prominent acts of violence since 1980. The Commission was to be formed with three civilians appointed by the Secretary General of the U.N. and accepted by both negotiating parties.

There were four major agreements at this meeting. The first agreement concerned the subordination of the Armed Forces to civilian power; the creation of a State Intelligence

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<sup>9</sup>El Diario de Hoy, 04 December 1990, pg. 1.

organization; the restructuring of the military justice regulation; and the proposing of laws that relate to paramilitary groups, recruitment and public security forces.

Second, the judicial system must be reorganized along with the laws related to the form of choosing the Supreme Court Judges. The election of these judges would be approved by two-thirds of the Legislative Assembly. Third, human rights laws would be based on the agreements signed in San Jose I. A National Attorney for the defense of the human rights would be appointed and would be elected by two-thirds of the Legislative Assembly. Fourth, the electoral system would be restructured. The Inter-party Dialogue Commission would be created to address these reforms, and it would serve as an important base for debate and cooperation across the political spectrum.<sup>10</sup>

#### The meeting of Caraballeda, Venezuela (May 1991).

This meeting was a continuation of the previous one. However, it tried to give more emphasis to those pending topics related to the armed forces and to the cessation of the armed conflict. The meeting concluded with few advances; but, it showed the will of both parties to arrive at a negotiated solution.

#### The meeting of Queretaro, Mexico (June 1991).

Once again, the topics discussed were related to the armed forces and the cease-fire. In relation to the Armed Forces, the government said that they would be reorganized to fit in the new Salvadoran democratic system. The government again recognized that the armed forces would be subordinated to civilian authorities, and that the agreements related to this topic were necessary for the pacification of the country. Based on this, the FMLN took an apparently flexible attitude, agreeing to discuss those topics already mentioned. However, they only discussed those aspects dealing with public security forces, and the cease-fire. Other pending topics were a source for later discussion.

#### The meeting of Mexico (July 1991).

The FMLN again continued to extend the course of the negotiation by evading the final agreements on topics related to the armed forces and the cease-fire. The FMLN argued that there were specific points in the topics of the armed forces and the cease-fire that had not been resolved. At the end, the FMLN brought a new topic for discussion that broke the agenda

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<sup>10</sup>Transcript of documents, Mexico City: Mexico, 27 April 1991.

presented in Caracas. In sum, this meeting was unsuccessful.

#### **The meeting of New York (21 September 1991).**

After a stagnation of the peace talks created by unrealistic demands of the FMLN in Mexico, the negotiation process resumed through the exigency of the United Nations. However, this time it included the participation of the Secretary-General of the U.N. and President Cristiani.

Cristiani was present solely to have an interview with the Secretary-General, given that his governmental commission would meet with the commission of the FMLN. The agreements of New York changed the plan settled on in Caracas and were based on the negotiation process, the cease-fire, and the disarmament and demobilization of the FMLN. Both parties only discussed those topics related to the negotiation of political agreements, the cease-fire, and the terms of the negotiation process. At the end, both commissions decided that a date for the cease-fire must be predetermined in a short period.

In sum, it was agreed to create the National Commission for a Peace Consolidation (COPAZ), to purge the armed forces, to reduce the armed forces, to change the doctrine of the armed forces, to improve the educational system of the armed forces, and to create a Civilian National Police Force (CNP).<sup>11</sup>

A new document was also signed known as *Entendidos de Nueva York* (Agreements of New York). The issues addressed in this proposal were the armed forces, the judicial system, the electoral system, and the ratification of constitutional reforms. These agreements also called for the conditions of a cease-fire, the political participation of the FMLN, the implementation of the peace agreements, and the participation of FMLN's ex-combatants in the CNP. The FMLN also agreed to drop its commitment to end the armed conflict by force.

#### **The meetings of Mexico (November 1991).**

The negotiations began here with the discussion of the public security doctrine and structure of the CNP. In these meetings, there were agreements of previous topics presented in other meetings. During these meetings, the FMLN announced to the government commission that its armed units would not surrender their weapons to any one. Such an attitude obviously denied the will of the FMLN to end of the armed conflict.

The agreements of Geneva clearly established that the purpose of the peace talks was to end the armed conflict by means of a political debate; something that could not be achieved

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<sup>11</sup>Transcript of document, New York: United States, 25 September 1991.

while the FMLN maintained its military structure. The FMLN, throughout the peace talks, used its military apparatus every time its general interests were threatened, to promote its position on certain issues.

#### The meeting of New York (16 December 1991).

The goal of this meeting was to reach a final agreement to end the armed conflict. With the presence of the Secretary-General, the meeting was a success. His presence gave dynamism to the negotiation process. Obviously, the Secretary General of the UN wanted to finish the peace talks before his term was over (31 December 1991).

In this meeting, President Cristiani came to join the peace effort. His participation also accelerated the peace talks so that an agreement could be reached before the last day of 1991.

#### The meeting of New York (31 December 1991).

Here, the end of the armed conflict came with the signing of the document known as *Acuerdos de Nueva York* (Agreements of New York). In these agreements, the government and the FMLN declared a definite end to the Salvadoran armed conflict. The agreements also reflected the commitment of both parties to sign the *Cese a el Enfrentamiento Armado de El Salvador* (CEA - Cessation of the Armed Confrontation of El Salvador). The agreements also called for an end of the FMLN's military apparatus, the incorporation of its combatants to the socio-political system, and the reduction of the armed forces.

Some commitments before the signing of the CEA were established. The government and the FMLN would meet again from the 5th to the 10th of January 1992 to negotiate the execution calendar of the agreements. If agreements did not exist by January 10, the U.N. would formulate a strategy to settle unresolved matters before the 15th of January. Finally, the formal signing of the CEA would be held on January 16 and it would be carried out from 1 February 1992 until 31 October 1992.<sup>12</sup>

Despite the Peace Accords of New York, FMLN's middle level commanders announced that they would not surrender their weapons to the government or to the armed forces. They would deliver their weapons to an international organization under the condition that they obtain power within the structure of the government. This event did not take place and the negotiation process continued as schedule.

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<sup>12</sup>Transcript of document, New York: United States, 31 December 1991.

**The meeting of New York (06-10 January 1992).**

In this meeting, a document was signed known as New York II. It included the details of the agreement signed on 31 December 1991 that would allow the final signing on 16 January 1992. The FMLN behaved negatively and accused the government of using the armed forces to intimidate its combatants scattered around the country. This attitude delayed the negotiation process until 12 January.

**The final meeting of Mexico (16 January 1992).**

In Chapultepec, Mexico, the government of El Salvador and the FMLN signed the final document known as *Los Acuerdos de Paz* (The Peace Accords). These accords outlined the peace talks, the process of the FMLN's demobilization, the reincorporation of the FMLN, the constitutional reforms, the demobilization of the armed forces, and the economic and political opening of the country under the supervision of ONUSAL.





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